The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

Southeastern Michigan's Conscious Living Magazine

FREE

May through August 2022 - Issue 80

Kashi Walters

Ann Arbor Artist Brings a Magical, Spiritual Touch to Her Creations

Chris McCall – Beyond the Voice Box · The Science of Sound Therapy · Sound Healers

Community-Supported Agriculture – Tantré and HoneyBee Farms

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After 40 years of serving the community, the most recent incarnation of Crazy Wisdom Bookstore closed its doors on February 15, and you might say it has been on "sabbatical." It was important to us to cross that threshold and then exhale, as a prelude to what comes next.

We have begun to have fresh thoughts about how the store can go forward, to serve its regional community. We have received numerous sincere and spirited inquiries and have had creative conversations about the store's meaning and value to its customers in southeastern Michigan, and about its future. We remain open to considering a variety of possibilities.

If you do not have substantial money to invest but would like to steward the store forward in all its aspects, under current ownership, with significant profit-sharing and a keen sense of proprietorship, we would be open to hearing from you.

If you would like to own/operate Crazy Wisdom Bookstore in this space, or a body/mind/spirit bookstore in this space but with your own name, or just have an independent bookstore in this space, please be in touch with us. We would also consider other types of proposals to own, manage or operate Crazy Wisdom, including ones in which a purchaser would buy the bookstore over a period of years.

Our intention is for this space to continue to be a bookstore, and we are waiting for the right person, couple, or partners to come to us, and be the spark that lights Crazy Wisdom's next incarnation. We are patient and not in a rush. The building itself is not for sale.

Contact Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter at: billz@crazywisdom.net

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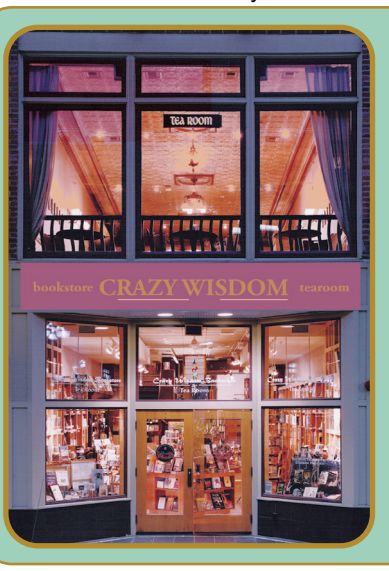
On the Cover

Kashi Walters

Kashi Walters' art is inspired by Gothic, Victorian, fairytales, and other magical influences.

You can follow Kashi on Facebook and Instagram @arcaneexpressions

Cover Photo by Robert Adisa Dayo



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CRAZYWISDOMJOURNAL.COM

This issue will be posted on our website as of May 1, 2022

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Crazy Wisdom Bookstore
was founded in 1982.
Since 1989, it has been owned by Crazy Wisdom, Inc., which consists of Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter.

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This issue is distributed starting in the last week of April.

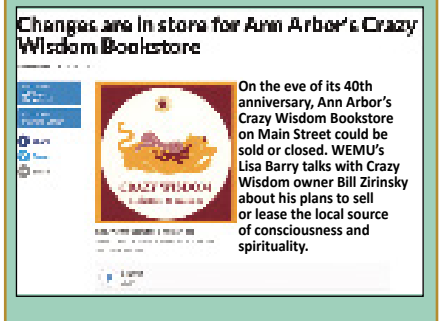
The deadline for Free Calendar submissions for the September to December 2022 issue is Monday, July 18, 2022.

Contact calendarforms@crazywisdom.net

The deadline for Paid Advertising is Monday, August 1, 2022

Contact tana@crazywisdom.net

Listen to the interview with Crazy Wisdom's co-owner, Bill Zirinsky, on All Things Considered with Lisa Barry.


Changes are in store for Ann Arbor's Crazy Wisdom Bookstore
On the eve of its 40th anniversary, Ann Arbor's Crazy Wisdom Bookstore on Main Street could be sold or closed. WEMU's Lisa Barry talks with Crazy Wisdom owner Bill Zirinsky about his plans to sell or lease the local source of consciousness and spirituality.

Changes are in store for Ann Arbor's Crazy Wisdom Bookstore by LISA BARRY NOV 3, 2021

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As a metaphysical, spiritual tool, and gift shop that also offers Reiki, **Crazy Wisdom Community Journal fits us perfectly. We have been advertising with them since our opening in 2018**. They have been fantastic to work with and even helped us by offering online advertising and talking us up on their social media. Tana is always there with an answer. She's quick to offer suggestions or reminders when asked and our ads always come out looking beautiful. I have no doubt we will be working with them for years to come.

—Kristen Madrid, Owner, Earth Elements

"Being local and supporting local is what we do! **Sharing those values with the Crazy Wisdom Community Journal is why we advertise** with them. They are an amazing resource for folks in the community to learn about what's happening.

—Ken Davis, Marketing Director, People's Food Co-op

"**My advertisement in the Crazy Wisdom Journal brings me a lot of business.** People come in saying they saw my ad in the Journal. Generally, I have found that word of mouth is the best way to build business, but **advertising in Crazy Wisdom Journal has really paid for itself. I love you guys!!**"

— Cathy Boaz, Owner, Kokopelli's Korner

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Meet Some of Our Creative Team

We sincerely appreciate all the talent that gets put to work to bring you the best *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* three times a year, and wanted to highlight different contributors from each issue in this space. Look for us to highlight some of our contributors in every issue.

Brian Napolean Cooper Jr. is a twenty-five-year-old Ann Arbor native. The oldest of five children, he grew up in a house never short of noise. With this, he quickly became a seeker of inner silence. Since the age of twelve, he found this silence through the creation of fantastical worlds. In many ways, storytelling saved his life. When not creating, Brian is spending time with his family, studying sustainability at Arizona State University, or playing fetch with his puppy Atlas. Read his personal essay, *The Modern Lost Boy* in this issue.

Richard Knapp is recently retired from teaching elementary school music in the Ann Arbor schools. He is a professional singer, mostly opera and musical theater, and he also danced professionally for over 20 years. His wife, Catherine, is a member of the Potters Guild. Knapp and his son, Grayson, worked together to earn their black belts in ninjutsu. He loves to read, ride his bike, walk outdoors and spend time with his two dogs and two cats. Knapp is our new distribution team member. Say "hi" when you see him delivering the Journal!

Hilary Nichols relocated from San Francisco to Ann Arbor in 2010 and quickly embraced the pace, the charms, and the freezing cold of her new Midwestern home. With a Creative Writing degree and a 20-year photography business, she is honored to engage with many of the thinkers, artists, and healers in the Crazy Wisdom community. After a decade producing and performing with the circus and backpacking across five continents, she is perfectly happy to hold her focus and raise her teen kid here, mostly.

Lynda Gronlund has been writing the *What's New in the Community* column since 2012. She is the owner of Balance Point Fitness, a small personal training studio, and an instructor and co-owner at PKSA Karate Ann Arbor North. She loves hearing from all the local practitioners, authors, artists, entrepreneurs, teachers, and leaders about their endeavors and contributions to the local Body Mind Spirit community. She lives in Ypsilanti with her elderly chihuahua, Gracie Lou.

Ash Merryman is an Ann Arbor based writer, poet, and artist whose creative fire is stoked by nature and animals. Aside from inventively mucking up paper, Ash loves hiking with their partner, learning about the local trees, reading novels with a dash of mystery, and birdwatching with their two fluffy cats. Find the Pets Column on page XX.

Diane Majeske is a writer based In Canton. A former award-winning reporter, she enjoys writing about the arts and all manner of holistic topics. She also is the author of three books: *Death on Deadline*, a newsroom-based murder mystery; *Magic, Miracles, and Mistletoe*, a holiday collection of short stories; and the non-fiction *Mom Tales: Stories of Parenting, Potties and Post-Partum Panic*. Majeske wrote the article featuring Kashi Amma Walters and her art in this issue.

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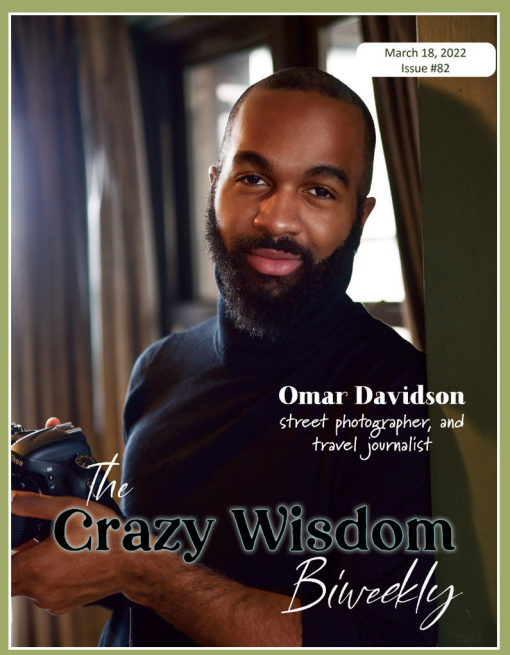
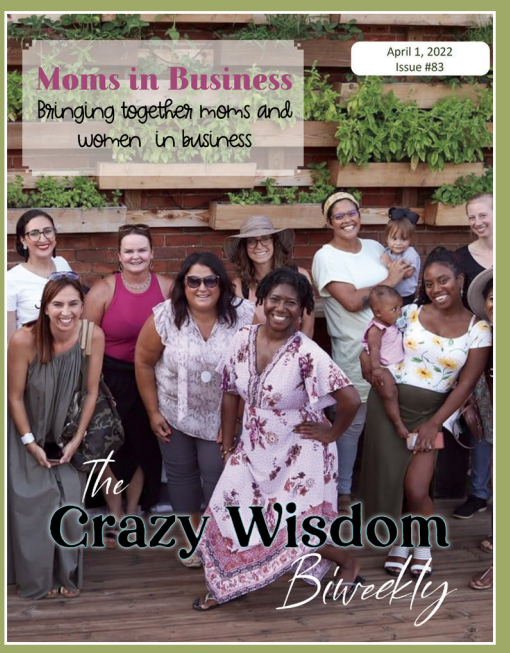
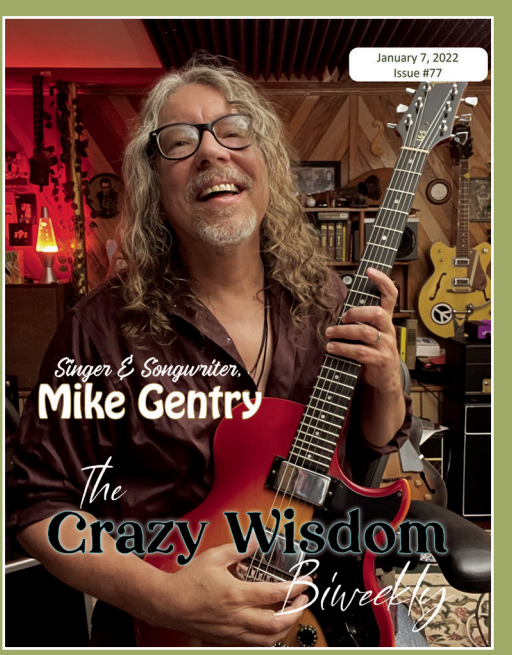
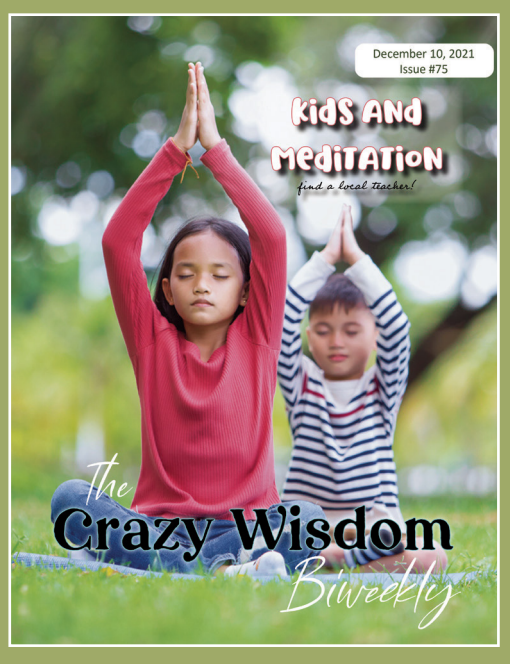
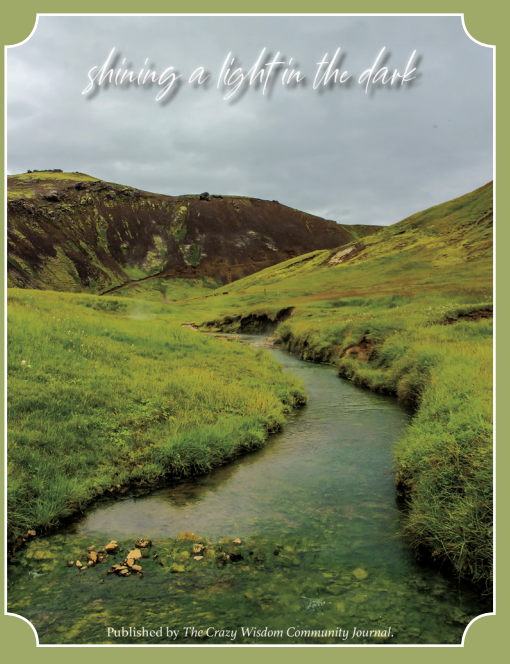
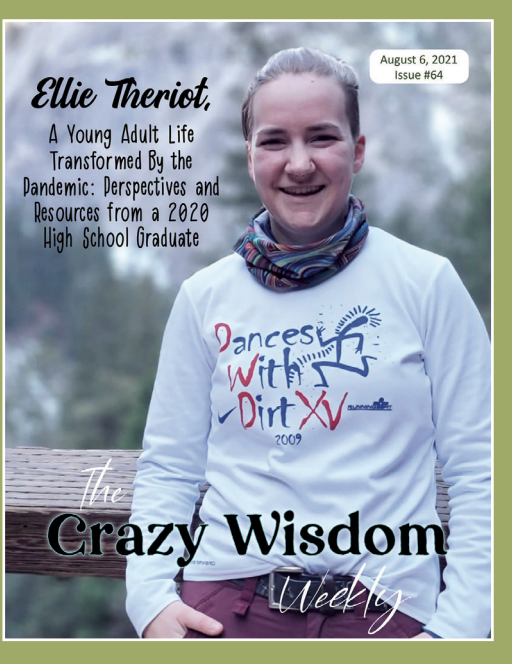


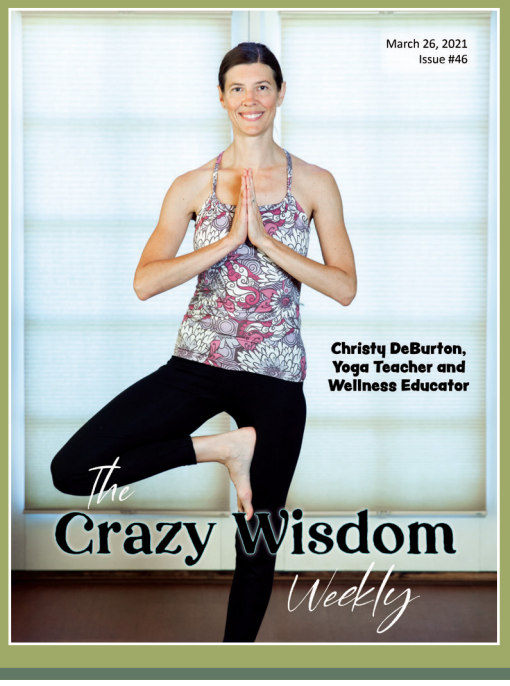


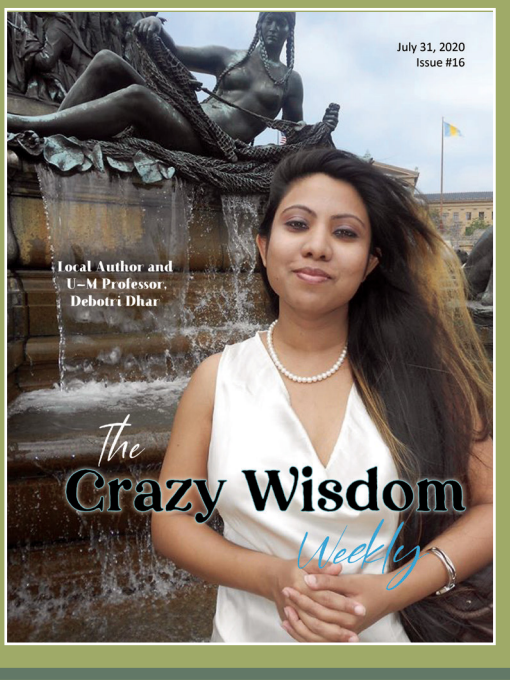


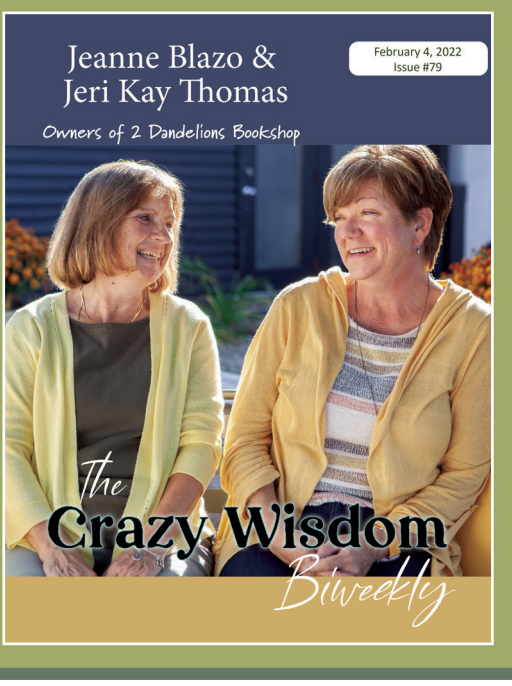





August 6, 2021
Issue #64
Ellie Theriot,
A Young Adult Life Transformed By the Pandemic: Perspectives and Resources from a 2020 High School Graduate
The Crazy Wisdom Weekly







Photos by Andrew Nixon

Becoming Me, Again:

The Dance of Transformation

By Megan Sims

My greatest gift is that I lead with the heart. Like a blooming yellow rose, I experience my life as a continuous, golden unfolding. Despite the daily stresses that human life brings, abundance, gratitude, and joy are my daily diet—synchronicity, intuition, and faith are my guiding lights.

How did I get here, to this place of joy and wholeness? Believe me, it wasn't always this way—there were many, *many* years of struggle and misery first.

This is a story of how I got my Self back, using my first language: dance.

My path to wholeness began, as is so often the case, with a breakdown. Everything in my life had to fall apart before I could come to recognize the dis-ease.

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It was the 90s. I was in New York City aspiring to become a professional choreographer—at least that was the plan. By day I was a nanny on the Upper East Side, and in Soho. After hours was another story: I was a wild woman on the loose, wanting to experience everything *now*. I was looking to be discovered as the next best thing. I felt unstoppable! I barely needed sleep at night. My life was a perpetual adventure: dancing at clubs almost every night, meeting artists and rebels wherever I went, rocking such extreme style as if every day was Halloween, I felt so *alive*… and yet, I began to see a shadow side to the wild ride. Eventually I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. My delusional mania had ripped through my life like a raging tornado; the wreckage it left behind—including lost jobs and ruined friendships—was immense.

I came home to heal. The mania flipped into a dreadful, dark depression, during which I recognized the "crazy" and the destruction of the mania. At this point I agreed to therapy and a medication (which I haven't needed now for twenty years). I am grateful to my parents for their crucial support. Sometimes when I see a homeless person with obvious signs of a mood or mental disorder I think, "that could have been me"—if my parents hadn't pushed me toward psychiatric help, and had the resources to cover it, what would have become of me? I am one of the lucky ones. From this humble place, I slowly and steadily built myself back up, one day at a time. The light in my life became teaching creative dance to kids through Ann Arbor Rec & Ed.

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The next big leap toward wholeness was the birth of my son. When he was born, I knew it was go time. There was no way I was not going to be the absolute best mother possible to this beautiful, beloved boy. I was motivated to become my best "me." I transitioned from working at Whole Foods Market to become a full-time dance teacher. My undergraduate studies of dance and creative writing had built a foundation of how to focus my passionate creativity into real works of art. To take my career to the next level, I now went to grad school to get a master's in counseling psychology. Feeling such therapeutic release and joy when I danced, I wanted to understand more about the inner workings of the human experience and of healing.

Then I discovered Nia, a holistic fitness practice that became the doorway to a world of personal healing that has made everything thereafter possible. It demonstrated how dance could be restorative: creating wholeness and connection rather than judgment and separation. The Nia Technique, created in the early 80s, teaches us to move from the inside out. It teaches us to be free to move "The Body's Way" while using technique to stay safe and grounded. It taught me (in contrast to the culture of professional dance that I experienced in college) that I didn't have to be anorexic, get my leg up over my head, or look perfect to be a "real dancer." Nia taught me how to listen, and to feel joy in the listening to the music, to my body, to life. Teaching Nia was a sink-or-swim affair: I had been certified for two weeks when my classes began—initially at the YMCA and A2Yoga, then EMU and UM—and I have never looked back since. That was 17 years ago! Now I teach a variety of dance and movement classes to a wide variety of populations. No matter if I'm teaching highly athletic folks or those with Parkinson's disease, I use the principles of Nia in everything I share.

Through the winding road of failures, courage, and grace, I have danced my way into a dream career. I help people stay fit, heal, and find joy in their bodies. My underlying mission is to help people achieve wholeness through dance and other healing modalities. The "Me-Again" in Me-Again Dance Wellness refers to the sense of *return* I get every time I dance—a return to my truest, fullest, most authentic Self. It works like a charm, every time. Every. Single. Time.

I believe that there is intelligent consciousness running through the entire body at all times–it's not just stored up in our heads–and that being "embodied" on a daily basis gives one access to incredible intuition and awareness.

The tools I use are Dance, Nia, InterPlay, energy medicine, chakra work, guided imagery and meditation, and intentional use of imagination. As I continue to grow as a person, the methods I learn get woven [responsibly and respectfully] into the tapestry of my work. Great joy comes from teaching in assisted living homes, working with those with dementia and Parkinson's, and dancing with kids and adults across a spectrum of wellness and fitness levels. More recently, I also use dance for sacred and spiritual purposes, including facilitating memorial dances and guiding ritual movement for a Rosh Hodesh (New Moon) women's group. The wildly varied work I do creates a colorful career that is deeply rewarding.

Dance is my medicine, always has been. I believe it is because of dance, and other intentional movement disciplines such as qi gong and yoga, that I have learned to listen with great awareness to my body, which is like a messenger of the soul and beyond. I believe that there is intelligent consciousness running through the entire body at all times—it's not just stored up in our heads—and that being "embodied" on a daily basis gives one access to incredible intuition and awareness. Moving meditations such as dance create a triad of presence through total engagement. Our bodies, minds, and spirits are effortlessly integrated. This golden triangle of Beingness is especially good for what it negates: fear, fragmentation, and judgement. When we are unified in ourselves, we become vitally available to bring unity to our communities and our world. When I plug into my body, I plug into my soul. When I plug into my soul, I plug into All That Is. This is the database of all information, and I have a direct connection when I dance. While dancing is a powerful metaphor for living a life of grace and beauty, in my case, dance literally transformed my life—and will continue to, always.

Megan Sims is the owner of Me-Again Dance Wellness. Sharing dance-medicine in a safe and loving environment is her mission in life. She is also co-founder of the All People's Planet Parade--a joyful ecoconsciousness raiser—every first Sunday afternoon of the month in front of the People's Food Co-op. You can learn more about her and her movement classes at meagaindance.com.

All Creatures Great & Small

Cat Wisdoms to Live and Lounge By

By Ash Merryman

Oh, cats–our most adorable teachers! Since ancient times, cats have been revered for their wisdom and protection. They were even considered demi-gods in ancient Egypt under the protection of the cat-headed goddess Bast. Featured in myths in numerous cultures throughout history, cats have garnered an age-old affinity still strong today. We love their blipping, purring, yawning, and mews. And, beyond these delights, we can learn so much from our cat friends. The wisdoms of cats are seemingly infinite, so I'll share my personal favorites of the many lessons taught to me by my two furry feline companions.

Featured in myths in numerous cultures throughout history, cats have garnered an age-old affinity still strong today.

Take Time for Self-Care. Cats are fastidious groomers, so much so that not grooming is a sign a cat may be unwell. They take ample time each day to take care of their soft coats, encouraging us to show up to our own lives as our most cared for selves. Some of my favorite ways to incorporate this cat wisdom are journaling, drawing, enjoying a cup of tea, and going for a walk. Our feline friends say it is always alright to pause for self-care, and there are many non-commercial ways to nurture ourselves. Cats gift themselves that full lick-down time. What does self-nurturing look like for you? *You deserve care from yourself.*

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Cherish Your Independence. Cats show us how to nurture our relationships while maintaining our autonomy and individual sense of self. While our furry friends are happy to cuddle up with us and play, they also live rich lives independent of us. This reminds us to value time for our own interests and inner lives with the knowledge that our relationships will still be there. Cats gently show us how having our own time and interests allows us to give of our energy more sustainably. Through balancing independent space and their relations marvelously, cats encourage this capacity in us. *You can have your own life while sharing your life.*

Be Your Abundant Self. Cats are unapologetically themselves, and we love them for it. A couple of years ago I experienced medical issues that forced me to take on less at home. This experience left me grappling with my own lovability and worth as I could no longer contribute in the same ways. One day, my cat Odin climbed onto my belly for cuddles, and I realized how much I love showing Odin affection simply for being himself. My cat obviously doesn't help with household or work tasks. Instead, he contributes his gentleness, patience, and unapologetic love of being pet for long periods of time regardless of what I or my spouse was up to. By being himself, my cat friend taught me the worth of my emotional contributions, as I offer emotional support and a space of nonjudgement to those I love. Since being guided by my cat to expand how I define my worth, I have regained good health and know that no matter the situation I am inherently valuable and can agilely find a new perspective. *You are inherently valuable and worthy, too*.

Experience Stillness. Sometimes the best response is passive. This can feel counterintuitive in our fast-paced society. Cats remind us we needn't always be active: stillness and observation may be wise alternatives. Observe how still your cat stays while watching a bird through the window. Or, how peaceful your cat is when stretched out in their favorite patch of sun. One of my favorite stillness exercises is to sit at the window with my cats and watch birds at the feeder every day. This taught me to slow down and enjoy the birds' songs, striking colors, and complex community. Stillness benefits both cats and humans alike. *Take time to be still and observe.*

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Listen to your intuition. Let's face it, cats can sense far more than us. They have more sensitive hearing such that they recognize the sound of your specific walk outside before you even get to the door. And cats can see at night with the most minimum light source. The fine senses of cats have earned them a reputation as protectors. Additionally, we can relate the surreal sensory capacities of cats to our sixth sense, our intuition. In this way, cats remind us to be attuned with all of our senses for full awareness. *Listen to the whispers of your intuitive sense.*

Communicate Your Needs. I bonded more with my two cats when I let them show me how they like to be pet, and now nothing melts my heart quite like them nuzzling their furry little faces on my hand. Cats communicate their needs without fear of judgement or disapproval, showing us that when we communicate about how to love us and what we need, we receive more of what feels like love and care to us, resulting in an increased sense of fulfillment. Like how my two cat friends seek out more cuddles now that I've learned how they want to be pet, I too, am more eager to spend time with people who make me feel respected and cared for. Cats are not worried their human friends will not like them anymore if they communicate their needs and preferences–they simply communicate, allowing themselves to be fully seen and cared for. *Have the courage to show others your honest self and needs.*

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Having Boundaries is Loving and Healthy. As the saying goes, cats choose you. They live life on their terms, and our relationships with them, are largely on their terms, too. Therefore, cats have excellent boundaries and know how to communicate them. Odin always pushes my hand down with his paw when he is done being pet. This small but firm gesture taught me that setting boundaries is a form of care. I had struggled with setting boundaries most of my life having grown up in a household that lacked healthy boundaries. So, it wasn't until I began working on setting healthy boundaries with an amazing therapist that I could see what my cat friends were showing me all along: setting and respecting boundaries allows our relationships to flourish in a space of safety and mutual respect. When we set boundaries, we are both exercising a knowing of ourselves and our needs as well as affirming and respecting ourselves. That is a lot of gifts to oneself in one sentence! Healthy relationships are part and parcel of healthy boundaries. A cat would be the first to tell us not to share space with those who disregard our boundaries. And, on the flip side, cats say to cuddle up to relations with respect for our thresholds. *Gift yourself and your relationships boundaries to flourish.*

There are so many other gifts of wisdom cats give us: calm, curiosity, bravery, and a pinch of magic are just a few. I hope you've enjoyed the furred lessons shared here, and that they've resonated with your experiences, too. I have so much gratitude for my sage cat teachers as I'm sure you do yours. Thanks for "paws"ing to meditate on the valuable teachings of cats!

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Do Unto Others:
A Modest Proposal

By Sandor Slomovits

One morning earlier this year, I went to buy tires at a local store I've patronized for over four decades. The man behind the counter and I recognized each other, he's worked there for many of those years. After we said our hellos, I told him what I needed and he said, "I've got the tires, but only one guy to put them on the cars. I'm full up today and for the rest of the week." (This was on a Tuesday morning.) "Come back next Monday," he said.

I've been driving for 55 years, and my work as a touring musician has meant that I've driven a great many miles. I've worn down and replaced a lot of tires. No one has ever before said they couldn't sell me tires for almost a week.

I've encountered similar worker shortages lately at my pharmacy, in grocery stores, and in other settings. I'm not the only one. The media has been full of stories about labor shortages in many parts of the economy, about the large percentage of health care workers, teachers, and childcare providers who are contemplating retiring, and about baby boomers who *are* retiring earlier than they'd planned to before the pandemic hit. People—young, older, skilled, unskilled, blue collar workers with low paying jobs, and white collar workers with large salaries have all quit at unprecedented rates in the past year. And the Great Resignation and the Great Retirement of 2021 appear to still be going strong in early 2022. It seems that the pandemic has once again taught America to sing "Take This Job and Shove It!" like we did when country music star Johnny Paycheck's version of the David Allan Coe song was in heavy radio rotation in 1977. Our current collective response to the pandemic is in stark contrast to the Rosie the Riveter phenomenon of WWII, when a great many women who had not previously worked outside the home stepped into the labor force to take the place of the men fighting overseas.

All this has had me remembering and reflecting on some of my earliest work-related memories.

"First of all, I am not stupid. Second, I do know how to speak Hungarian."

My first job was as a clerk in the hardware section of a Caldor department store in upstate New York in the summer of 1966, just after my junior year of high school. (That I didn't have a job before then is a testament to my parents' over-protectiveness, and to our relatively comfortable financial status.) A few days after I started, I was stocking shelves when a man asked me about the location of some item. I didn't know where it was and told him I'd go and find out. As I turned to leave, he said to his wife, not bothering to lower his voice, "Ez egy hulye. Nem tudd semmitt." Which is Hungarian for, "This one is stupid. He doesn't know anything." I turned around and said, "Eloszor is, nem vagyok hulye. Masodszor, todok beszelni Magyarul." Which is Hungarian for, "First of all, I am not stupid. Second, I *do* know how to speak Hungarian."

When I'd been hired a few days earlier, it had been emphasized to me that the customer is always right. Nobody said anything about some customers acting like they *had* the right to behave badly, but as it turned out, a disheartening number did.

My next job, after college, was parking cars. (Why I decided on that line of work after graduating with a BA in History from a pretty good university is a tale for another time.) I didn't mind most aspects of my job but hated the attitude of a significant number of my customers. Most of them were white collar professionals: lawyers, doctors, university professors, and businessmen. Not many ever said hello or good-bye. Few felt obliged to say thank you or please, even when they asked for, and received, special favors. They regularly felt free to rudely express their frustrations at not being served as quickly as they wanted, even when they saw that others were ahead of them and that I was hustling. I interpreted their thoughtlessness and carelessness as their way of conveying their self-perceived superiority, and my less-than status. My bosses were no better; besides paying only minimum wage—which then, as now, was not a living wage—they were rarely respectful or accommodating. They knew they could easily replace me if I quit.

I became keenly sensitized to this lack of common courtesy, the absence of these basic signs of respect, and began to see it also directed at other people who worked at jobs on the low end of the economy. I noticed it everywhere. I saw that waiters, gas station attendants, janitors, and others all got similar treatment from some of the people they served. The experiences left a powerful and lasting impression on me.

After parking cars for about two years, while I was beginning to learn my craft as a folk musician, I worked as a janitor for a couple of weeks. (Another long story—how I got that job, and how and why I was promoted.) Years later, when I began playing music in elementary schools, my brief stint as a janitor gave me extra insight and appreciation for the work that school custodians do--how critical they seemed to be to the smooth working of every school.

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After about three years of parking cars, working as a janitor, and at a few other similar employment experiments, I was able to quit those jobs and begin focusing all my energies into playing music and everything that went along with trying to make a life in the arts. Over the many years since then I have frequently been aware just how fortunate I have been. "Must be nice to have a job where people applaud when you do it," a friend once told me, her tone making it clear that that was not her daily experience of work, even though she had what looked to me like a pretty good and reasonably paying job. "I'd give my right arm to be able to do what you're doing," is another line I've heard many times over the years. I've always listened sympathetically. It's not been hard to sense how much frustration and pain is driving that otherwise nonsensical sentence.

Perhaps the great resignation did not start recently. Perhaps there has long been a great resignation going on, when many, many people have been resigned to work at jobs they hated because they didn't feel they had other options. So, when the pandemic forced people to be away from their work for the first time or, if they were deemed essential workers and were compelled to work despite the dangers of their job conditions, they saw their employment in a new light and, in the words of another song, a sea chantey, they decided, "The times were hard and the wages low, leave her Johnny, leave her…" It's no coincidence that Nomadland was the picture of the year in 2021.

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There are many, many complex reasons driving this Big Quit, and TV pundits, talk show hosts, business owners, social scientists, and political leaders have credited or blamed all of them: lingering illness caused by Covid, lack of childcare, shuttered schools, desire for flexible hours and better working conditions (things many employers are reluctant to grant), sexual and racial harassment, unemployment benefits, the government stimulus checks, pandemic savings, the reexamination of priorities, the deterioration of Americans' can-do-will-do fiber…the list goes on.

Certainly, the recent uptick in loutish, abusive behavior by customers on airlines, in restaurants, and in other difficult work environments has not helped and has possibly amplified the lately-loud chorus of, "I ain't workin' here no more."

It's way above my pay grade to understand, explain, or fix any of this. I don't know how our society could provide meaningful work and decent wages to all our people. I don't know if and how we could eliminate all distasteful, unpleasant, or dangerous jobs. (Though improving working conditions to the degree possible and paying more generously would be a good start.) I am not offering a single, comprehensive, one size fits all solution, nor do I expect, or even think it necessary, for all workers in every job to be greeted daily with "Fanfare for the Common Man."

However, I do have a modest proposal. We could start—all of us—by treating better the people who serve us daily. While John Keats was probably right when he wrote, "Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced," meaning that we may never really understand what it's like to work as a barista, bus driver, or garbage collector, surely we should be able to understand what it feels like to be treated disdainfully—and its opposite.

Or to put it the way the sages of many traditions have long said in variations of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do onto you."

Random Acts of Kindness

Raptors to the Rescue!

Wildlife Ambassadors Teach Lessons in Conservation

By Madeline Strong Diehl

Like many people I know, if you told me in the summer of 2020 that the pandemic would probably drag on for two years or more, I would not have believed you. In fact, I would have thought you were a negative, defeatist person, and I would have avoided you like—well, the plague.

I remember how claustrophobic my husband and I already felt that summer—so much so that we went out and bought a used two-person kayak so we could at least explore the Huron River watershed and nearby Metro parks. We had often spotted blue herons during our regular walks around Argo Park, but our kayak enabled us to reach places where, within just a few miles of Ann Arbor and other, smaller towns, we were able to see raptors such as hawks, egrets, and even a bald eagle. This brought me hope that, despite all the bad news about climate change, wildlife organizations located in the region around Ann Arbor must be doing something right. It also brought me much-needed distraction as I vicariously watched these magnificent birds in flight.

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Raptors are excellent hunters because of their speed and stealth, and these characteristics also make them difficult to spot in the wild. However, residents of southeastern Michigan have an unusual opportunity to see raptors up close and personal at Ann Arbor's Leslie Science and Nature Center (LSNC). The Center opened its doors to visitors in June of 1986, and it incorporated raptors into its educational programming in 2006.

For various reasons, these birds cannot survive in the wild. Most have suffered an injury, such as a collision with a car. Others were born in captivity and do not have the skills to fend for themselves. But at the LSNC, the raptors are given the chance to maintain lives that offer them the same kind of dignity and nobility that have caused humans to revere them and identify with them since time immemorial.

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The LSNC houses and cares for eleven raptors, and when talking to visitors on-site or during off-site presentations at schools, offices, and elsewhere, the birds' caretakers, trainers, and handlers call them "wildlife educators" and "ambassadors" explains David Clipner, director of education and wildlife.

"We treat our raptors as staff, and it's critical that we give them respect because they are the educators, not us," said Clipner, 42, a man with a long reddish beard and moustache and intense, pale blue eyes. "We make clear to people that the only reason they are here is because we can't release them. If they could be in the wild, that's where they should be. But since they can't, we give their lives as much purpose and meaning as we can. They can provide conservation education by representing their wild counterparts."

Each bird lives in its own enclosure and embarks on its own individual training program. Feeding time provides staff with one opportunity to train the birds and keep their brains stimulated. During my half-hour tour, I watched as a caretaker named Lisa went from enclosure to enclosure, issuing the verbal cues that each bird had to follow before it could receive its food.

The birds are not given names because the Center does not want visitors to think they are pets. Instead, they are referred to by their species. "Eagle" is by far the largest bird in residence, and it was also the most active on the day I visited, flying in great excitement from perch to perch as it watched Lisa approach with its dinner. Lisa instructed Eagle to "wait," but it took a few minutes for the bird to relax and respond to the verbal cue. Then Lisa praised Eagle and slid its food down a chute into the enclosure. I watched in fascination—and okay, with some kind of strange primal, visceral fear—as the eagle used its huge, scaly talons to hold down a dead rat while its razor-sharp beak expertly flayed, filleted, and disemboweled it in a matter of minutes.

Clipner said that watching Eagle is a highlight for many visitors because she is so large and fierce. I asked him if children are ever afraid when they watch Eagle and the other birds attack their food, and he replied that many people do harbor some fear. "And that fear means that people are emotionally engaging with the birds in a powerful way. That's an opening for us to educate and transform people's fear into respect."

Clipner says that the LSNC's educational mission would be successful without the raptors, but the raptors are very popular and draw a lot of people in.

Clipner said that Eagle used to provide even more thrills for visitors because she has been trained to take off from his glove, fly freely for about fifty yards, and return. But Eagle lost some of her flight skills during the pandemic because tours were discontinued in early 2020. (Both on-site tours and off-site visits by the Wildlife Ambassadors have started up again as of January.) Eagle is slated to begin her flight training program again in June, though Clipner adds that he can't predict when she will be ready to demonstrate her flying skills for visitors. One of the red-tailed hawks will also undergo flight training.

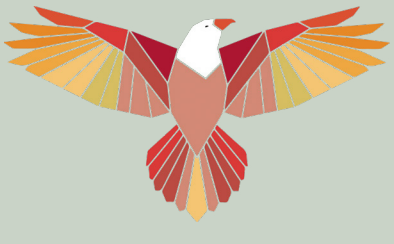
Is Clipner ever afraid that Eagle won't come back?

"No," he said. "The Eagle trusts me mainly because she knows that I am going to keep taking good care of her by being a consistently safe perch and source of food. We do have a relationship with the birds, and they trust us because they know we will provide them with those needs. But they do not 'like us.' In fact, I would say they simply tolerate us. It is important for us to remember to thank the animals when we work with them—verbally, and in other ways. We have to remember not to become complacent. These animals are in captivity, and they shouldn't be. Of course, working with them can be very exhilarating, but I'm an ape at the top of the food chain, and that's stressful for them. I have to remember that if we are not careful, we could be the worst part of their day."

After fourteen years of teaching young people about animals and the natural world, does Clipner believe that children are more knowledgeable now about the environment and the need to protect it?

"Yes," he says without hesitation. "At first when I used to ask kids questions, most of the time they didn't know the answers. And now, I will teach programs and most of them know almost all the answers. This shift is extremely rewarding and for us, as educators, it validates our mission."

Clipner says that the LSNC's educational mission would be successful without the raptors, but the raptors are very popular and draw a lot of people in. "In some ways they're the carrot we can offer the public, and just as we are making every effort to stimulate the brains of our wildlife ambassadors, they are helping us to stimulate the minds of the people who visit here, young and old. The kindness they show toward us is in how they educate us about the need to care for the earth. They help remind us that we are animals, too. They inspire us to ask important questions, like how can we better connect to nature and the wildlife around us? They teach us that everything must stay in balance, and that we humans must be part of that balance."



Visit the raptors at the Leslie Science and Nature Center at 1831 Traver Road in Ann Arbor. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. Call (734) 997-1553 for more information or visit lesliesnc.org.

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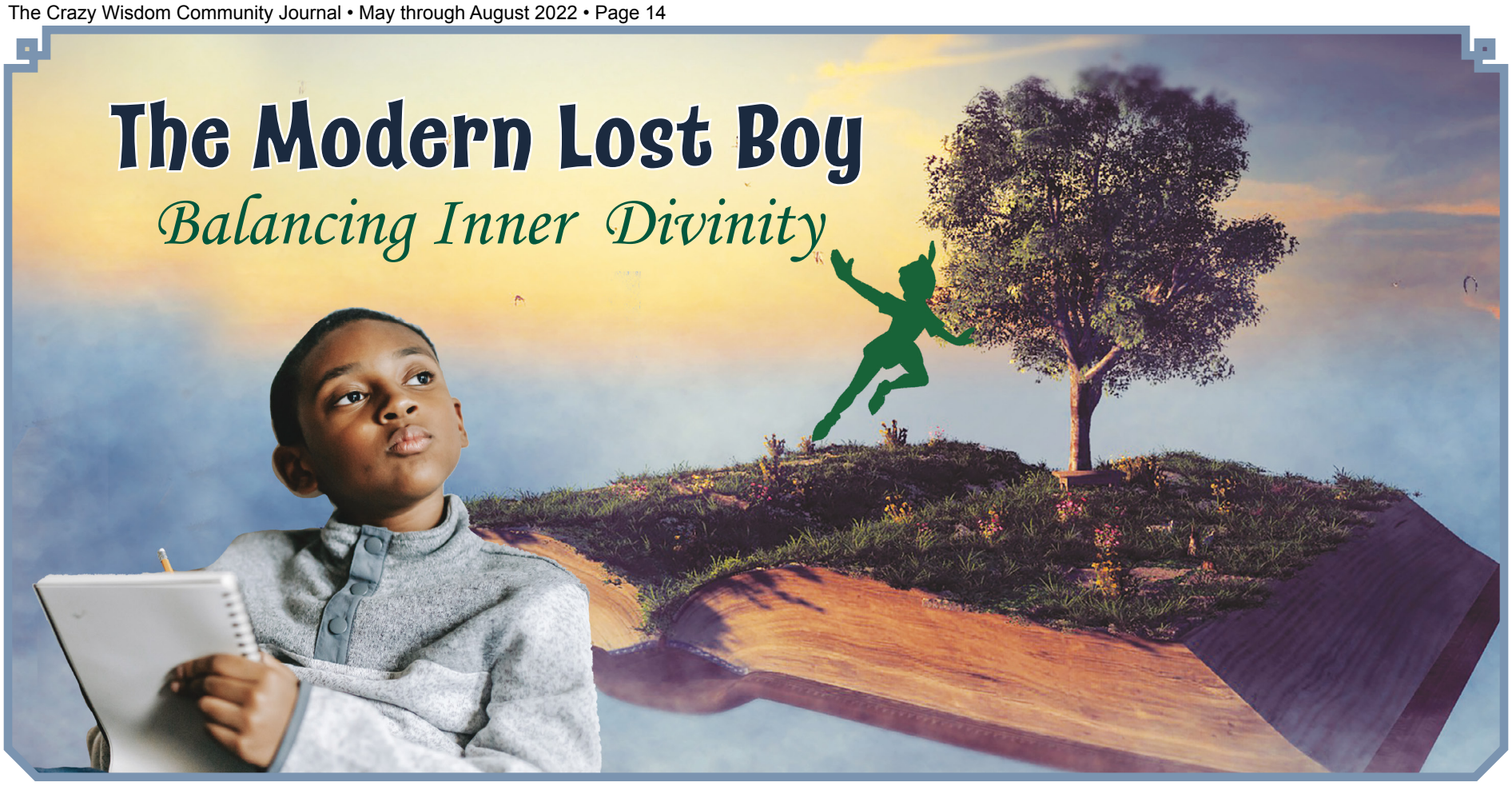
The Modern Lost Boy

Balancing Inner Divinity



By Brian Napolean Cooper Jr.

As I drove down a familiar road on a particularly sunny August day, I stumbled upon a sign just at the edge of the street that read, “discipline equals freedom.” Ironically, this inspirational motto was posted by a storage facility on Ann Arbor’s southeastern tip. Even more interesting, this seemingly insignificant board would almost instantly redirect the course of my life— dramatic, I know.

But let’s go backward a bit to better understand the forward.

Some of my earliest memories are of boxes. Not literal boxes like those made of cardboard or plastics, but ones built entirely of the world’s socially constructed rules about who I was supposed to be—many of which predated my birth by hundreds of years. These boxes could be better thought of as cages—but referring to them as such would total two dramatic proclamations in the span of two short paragraphs, and I promise I’m not *that* over-the-top.

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I was (still am) black, and so I wasn’t meant to be smart. Since I *was* (hopefully still am) smart, I was expected to go into a lucrative professional career. As a boy, books weren’t too cool, especially books like *Twilight*. Likewise, creative writing was for losers. It seemed that every street that I decided to take, I’d immediately run into a roadblock or a “no outlet” sign. Whenever a tiny flame of confidence was lit in my inner core, it wasn’t long before someone or something told me that I was wrong or misled. Let’s just say that I was no stranger to the phrase, “grow up.”

As many of us do, I associated imagination and pure creative energy with childhood, so much so that I was fully convinced that adults didn’t have fun. Not necessarily because the adults around me seemed particularly drab or anything, but because we (the kids) were the ones that dreamt and played and *hoped*. Young kids were scolded for having imaginary friends past the age of eight, preteens for hanging onto their astronaut aspirations, and fifteen-year-old boys for spending all their time lost in the fictious world of novels. All this scolding persistently came from the same archetypal person: the grownup. To my younger self, it appeared that every one of them had long since passed the invisible threshold into the world of adulthood, into a world void of sunshine and possibility.

It wasn’t long before my raging fear of growing older set in. In my early teen years, around the time that my father taught me to drive, I remember asking him if he still enjoyed getting behind the wheel, if he had fun each time he shifted our red Ford Windstar into gear. He chuckled and said that he *did* have fun driving, but I truly believed that he only said this to save me from the daunting realization that I only had a few more years left before I joined him, and all the other post-high schoolers, on the other side of that proverbial threshold. And so, on every subsequent driving lesson, I would ask him the same question to see if I could ever detect the hidden truth in his words.

I lived with a looming storm of dread overhead, taunting me with the promise of one day depleting all my joy and wonder. Soon, the path that was set out before me and the path that I truly wanted to take existed in such a state of dissonance that my inner drive, my divine masculine energy, was all but snuffed out before I could reach the age of thirteen. With this, I retreated inward to distract myself from feeling as if I’d already seen my expiration date. I set up permanent residence in the world behind my eyes. I guess you could think of my thirteen-year-old self as one of Peter Pan’s lost boys, just blacker and with a cell phone instead of a spear.

I existed in this fashion into my high school years, and as the world expanded by way of social media, I found myself moving in the opposite direction, collapsing so far into myself that I’d practically submitted the reigns of my life’s decisions to whoever asked for them. Externally, I went where I was supposed to go, did what I was supposed to do, and skimmed by with as little autonomy as a leaf floating down a stream. But inside, I built entire worlds out of my hopes and desires.

I would become so absorbed in this internal world that I would delude myself into confusing it with reality. *Maybe if I dream hard enough, this all will be real one day,* I’d think to myself. I practically swam in the formlessness of fantasy, all the while convincing myself that I was merely “free-spirited” or “spontaneous.” I flew so high in the clouds that I forgot I had legs, and at that point, the concept of “self-discipline” was as foreign to me as the dark side of the moon.

In my late teens and early twenties, I found myself in the whirlwind of a vicious cycle that would go as follows:

While going about life in my formless manner, I’d spontaneously receive a magic idea delivered from the heavens, maybe in the form of a story concept or a new college major or a more traditionally lucrative career path (often to please external forces). With this new idea rumbling inside, I’d fuel myself solely on the vision of me accomplishing this goal. I would envision my future in such detail that it almost felt like I’d already achieved what I had yet to set out toward, and it felt good.

As many of us do, I associated imagination and pure creative energy with childhood, so much so that I was fully convinced that adults didn’t have fun… I lived with a looming storm of dread overhead, taunting me with the promise of one day depleting all my joy and wonder.

But then I would get a whiff of all the work that it would take to get to those dreams, and since I associated work— you know, the activity that adults always droned on about— with boredom, self-constraint, and rigid structure, my passion for the new project would burnout before I’d even started. After all, it’s a lot more fun to fanaticize about goals than to chase them, right?

This pattern was sustained for two reasons: one, I’d become so disconnected from my outer world that I simply didn’t care enough about making genuine, tangible progress towards my dreams, and two, I was doing just enough to trick those around me (and myself) into thinking that I was on a path of upward momentum in the general direction of my goals.

As the years went on, I would see the expansion of my inner world in the form of sun-sparkled meadows filled with the flowers of my life’s goals, ice-capped mountains that housed my visions of the future, and starburst galaxies that continually birthed new stars of ideas. My inner world became my oasis, a place that I could go to get a taste of possibilities. In here, I could rest easy on the cotton candy clouds of Neverland, and no one could ever tell me that I couldn’t.

All of this may sound damn cool, and I would have to agree. To hold onto childlike imagination and wonder is truly a superpower in a world overrun by rat races, mindless consumerism, and those metaphorical boxes that I mentioned earlier. The problem wasn't in my brain mechanisms themselves, but in how I was employing them. I used my colorful mind to escape rather than to create.

This escapism reached its finale during the winter of my twenty-second year, the era that started the destruction that would ultimately lead to my reformation. At the start of this frigid winter, the tension between my lofty goals and my static action hit its crescendo, climaxing in a grand crumbling of all that I knew. Instead of a slap back to reality, the universe gifted me a swift and sudden kick to the backside. My vision was not yet crystal clear, but my eyes had been forced open.

But then I would get a whiff of all the work that it would take to get to those dreams, and since I associated work— you know, the activity that adults always droned on about— with boredom, self-constraint, and rigid structure, my passion for the new project would burnout before I'd even started.

Instead of graduating from college as were lots of my peers, I found myself at the receiving end of a dismissal letter from my institution. As I held the letter in my hands, knuckles turned to icicles and heart pounding in my ears, it was evident that my directionless wandering had not led me to the land of Oz. No, it seemed that I was much more fit for the land of college dropouts.

To make it easier to harbor this secret, I withdrew from my family and friends, electing to spend my time on my own so that no one could sense the darkness that seemed to be chained to my wrist.

With this isolation came waves of emptiness. It wasn't that I was sad, I simply didn't care about anything. I lost motivation in damn near every aspect of my life, which meant that staying at a job for longer than three months was all but impossible. I was out of school, out of work, out of human connection, and out of direction. Truly, I felt as if a fire had been set under the foundations of my life and everything that I'd become comfortable with was burnt to ashes.

To numb the discomfort of this destruction, I fell into various other forms of escapism, but more in the realm of earthly pleasures, one of which being my dependency on unhealthy foods. I was in the prime condition to fall prey to these storms of addiction because it was only when the water from their dark clouds rained down on me that I felt anything: it was only then that I felt *alive*. It wasn't long before I gained upward of fifty pounds and my body became unrecognizable.

To hold onto childlike imagination and wonder is truly a superpower in a world overrun by rat races, mindless consumerism, and those metaphorical boxes that I mentioned earlier.

Eventually, even my inner space became a cold world of gray clouds and barren plains, and it was then that I knew that this wasn't going to be the story of the rest of my life. I'd declared myself at my own personal rock bottom, but with that, I knew it was only up from there. In this place of darkness, I finally understood the beauty of the light. With the help of my seemingly eternal optimism, I willed a sunflower to burst through the frozen grounds and reach skyward toward the sun that I knew would one day return to me.

It was a full two and a half years after that fateful winter when I saw the sign, "discipline equals freedom," and I knew then that without reclaiming my power, nothing in my life would ever change. If I were to continue onward in the fashion that I'd been moving— going wherever I was led and warding off responsibility at every turn, all the while pretending that I directed the ship— I'd never reach the destination that I had long ago conjured in my mind's eye--a destination of freedom, exploration, and peace. But even more important than this realization was the validation and care that I now afforded to my inner light, my truest essence. For the first time in a long time, I *wanted* to get better.

Over the next few months, I would embark on an arduous quest to rebuild my life from the ashes left in the wake of the fire of aimlessness. I had to shine lights into hidden parts of myself, the parts that equated adulthood with emptiness. I had to realize that to exist in a world completely structured around my goals and desires was beautiful, not strenuous. As I built, I imbued every brick with confidence, drive, and structure. More importantly, I discovered that it was possible for me to work my ass off.

Soon, I found my existence beating to a new rhythm. I'd learned to wield the infinite strength of my feminine creative prowess while amplifying and grounding this power with my masculine forces of dedication and will power. And the more that I lived in this way, the more that I *live* in this way, the more that my dream seeds blossom into the wonderous lotus flowers that make up my reality.

When I had slain the parts of my makeup that worked against me, the parts that enabled me to lie idly as I was steamrolled by the world, avenues opened for my passions and goals to seep through into the physical. With my eyes washed clear of the debris of the old ways, I reenrolled into college to study sustainability where I now maintain a perfect GPA. After powering through nearly an entire year of bodily ailments from a previous life of lethargy, I now exercise daily as evident by the strengthening of my body. And now that I've learned to dream with my eyes open, I stand confident in my hope of one day becoming a published novelist, and I'm fearless in the face of the concrete steps ahead to achieve this lofty goal.

So, to answer my previous question: no, it's not more fun to fantasize about goals than it is to chase them. I was entirely misguided in thinking that my imaginings were any more delectable than this reality, and it wasn't until I finally opened my eyes that I saw this. With that, I implore all the dreamers out there to keep on conjuring those visions of ecstasy, but please, always remember that even Peter Pan must take breaks from flight to plant his feet in the soil.

And lastly, to little Brian, thank you for never giving up your ability to *see*.

Brian Napolean Cooper Jr. is an Ann Arbor native. The oldest of five children, he grew up in a house never short of noise. Since the age of twelve, he found his own voice through the creation of fantastical worlds. When not creating, Brian is spending time with his family, studying sustainability at Arizona State University, or playing fetch with his puppy, Atlas. You can contact Cooper at briancooperjunior@gmail.com.

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From Depot Town to Showtime:

AN INTERVIEW WITH ACTOR

Leo Sheng

By Cashmere Morley

"The roles I've taken so far have all been trans characters. And so, they are innately trans stories," said Leo Sheng. "And with my job comes this joy of getting to be this type of representation that I didn't have growing up. So maybe [the reason I'm an actor] is a little selfish, but I'm excited I have this opportunity to tell stories, period."

Sheng, a Ypsilanti-native-turned-LA-actor, is still awaiting news that his *Showtime* drama, *The L-Word: Gen Q*, is getting a green light for a third season.

Sheng's character, Micah Lee, is laying some crucial groundwork for other transgender-Asian stories to be told. Micah is soft-spoken but determined. He's masculine but sensitive. He's humble but he's also one of the show's queer Casanovas.

The result is a complex, queer character whose story lines are the sum of more than just his gender identity. Micah is all of these things while also carrying some of the show's more emotionally heavy scenes as a budding young therapist. Genuinely, he wants his friends and family to be *happy*—a word the show explores through the filters of a diverse L.A. friend group of 20-somethings who are discovering the complexities of who *they* are and what *happiness* means to *them*.

Season two of *Gen Q* evolves the character of Micah into a relatable, deeply sensitive, and at times, messy human being, who is exploring love, sex, and life like the rest of us, one moment at a time. But as a queer Asian trans man, the lens is uniquely focused on these moments in a way not represented often on the screen. Sheng, having lived through certain parallels, is uniquely aware of how special the character is.

He credits Micah's complex story lines to the writers of *Gen Q*, but it is as much of Sheng's own willingness to tell a human story, not just a transgender story, that really makes Micah's character transcend queer stereotypes on screen. Micah's transness does not define him as much as it propels him.

During the interview, a baby, not Sheng's, will coo in the background of his apartment. He explains, "My household is four adults, and one baby. One Christmas, one of the gifts between us was a set of shot glasses of the Golden Girls. All the adults have one we relate to the most; I am Rose. I think it's my Midwestern naivete." Underlying the L.A. sparkle is Sheng's Midwest charm.

Sheng giggles when asked if he had held any jobs around Ypsilanti he wanted to talk about, before his acting days on the set of *Gen Q*. "None that lasted very long," Sheng confessed.

Before sharing the screen with Jennifer Beals and Rosie O'Donnell, Sheng did what most college students around here do: work a few months at Bob Evans (or some Bob Evans equivalent), dabble with various student jobs around campus, and put in 20,000 steps a day collecting shopping carts as a Whole Foods employee.

"I just graduated in 2017 with my bachelor's in sociology [from the University of Michigan], when I was messaged on Instagram by a casting office in New York, and they were looking for trans actors to play trans characters," Sheng said. "At that point, I had no acting experience, and they decided to take a chance on me. I read for the role from Michigan from the Charter Multicultural Center. Actually, one of my co-workers helped me audition."

Shortly after that, Sheng flew out to New York to read with the director for an indie movie called *Adam,* where Sheng would land the part of Ethan. This was Sheng's first acting role.

"I never really thought acting was going to be the path I took," said Sheng. "I actually used to think I was going to be a writer or a director. As an Asian person, and as a trans person, there were so few people who held my identity, doing that kind of work. At the beginning, I just didn't feel like there was space for me. It's still hard to believe that I'm here doing this."

In high school, Sheng would develop a love for writing fan-fiction. Essay-writing projects would delight him. Said Sheng, "I've always felt like stories were really important—to be able to tell our stories any way we can."

Where does Sheng's story begin?

The story where Sheng grew up in Ypsilanti began around age one, when his mom, who was living in Texas at the time, adopted him from Hunan, China at six months old. About six months after that, they moved to Michigan, where Sheng lived until he was 21. Sheng went to school around Ypsi "before Ypsi consolidated schools," noting that he went to Estabrook Elementary, then West Middle School, and was the first graduating class of Ypsilanti New Tech High. During his time in Ypsi, Sheng recalls being one of the only Asian kids in his classes, one of the only kids to be raised by two moms, and one of the only kids he knew who identified as queer at that time.

Locally, Sheng said, "there's a lot of acceptance [around being queer], but I think there's very separate spheres. Kind of a "you mind your business and I'll mind mine" mentality. I don't know how much has changed since I went to school there, I think the student body was predominantly black and brown, then white students and East and Southeast Asian students or South Asian students. We were maybe on the lower end of the demographic. That was definitely challenging—to kind of find a place where I felt like I really belonged, though I did have friends," said Sheng, noting that when he got to U of M, it was like a whole different world had opened up.

Before sharing the screen with Jennifer Beals and Rosie O'Donnell, Sheng did what most college students around here do: work a few months at Bob Evans (or some Bob Evans equivalent), dabble with various student jobs around campus, and put in 20,000 steps a day collecting shopping carts as a Whole Foods employee.

"I'm suddenly in an environment where there's a ton of East Asian students, international programs, and stuff like that. I actually didn't join any of the Asian student alliances because I think as an Asian American person, who grew up very ingrained in, and close to whiteness, I had different views than some of my peers."

The story where Sheng began to identify as trans began as a car accident that lead to a queer reckoning. "I always knew that I was not a traditionally feminine girl," said Sheng. The accident led to a custody battle that led Sheng to therapy, where he discovered vocabulary like *trans.*

SHENG, HAVING LIVED THROUGH CERTAIN PARALLELS, IS UNIQUELY AWARE OF HOW SPECIAL THE CHARACTER IS.

"I remember telling a therapist that until I looked in the mirror, I forgot that I was a girl," Sheng remembered, "It was like I always knew, in a way. I just didn't have the tools to know what *it* was, until therapy. I hate the argument that doctors are teaching kids to be trans. They're not; they're giving them the language they can finally use to describe how they are feeling." Sheng was 12 when he came out as transgender.

The story where Sheng became an activist for trans youths around the world began as a social media journey.

"I feel like I'm only recently kind of starting to feel the impacts of that," said Sheng, who documented his trans journey from the start, when he was around 13 years old. "I think I've always just sort of existed in this online industry. I knew people were consuming my story, but I think it only really hit me after I started the show."

For the last 13 years, Sheng had been providing "generous access to myself" which came with a certain responsibility.

"It wasn't about teaching people," said Sheng, "It was about connecting with other trans men and just talking about myself in a way that I didn't think anybody cared about. When I had a YouTube channel, I didn't feel like I was connecting with people."

Through Instagram, Huffington Post Articles, and MTV Voices, Sheng found the community he was looking for. "People have connected with me, and reached out to me, and shared their stories with me over the years. Sometimes people tell me their deepest, darkest secrets. It's a massive honor to be trusted with that."

The story where Sheng ended up as a regular on a drama on *Showtime* began with a casting call. *The L-Word* was rebooting with a mix of old cast members from the original show, and a new, younger crew. The show was specifically looking for a trans-Asian male to play Micah.

Leo Sheng on the filming set of The L Word.

Photo provided by Showtime

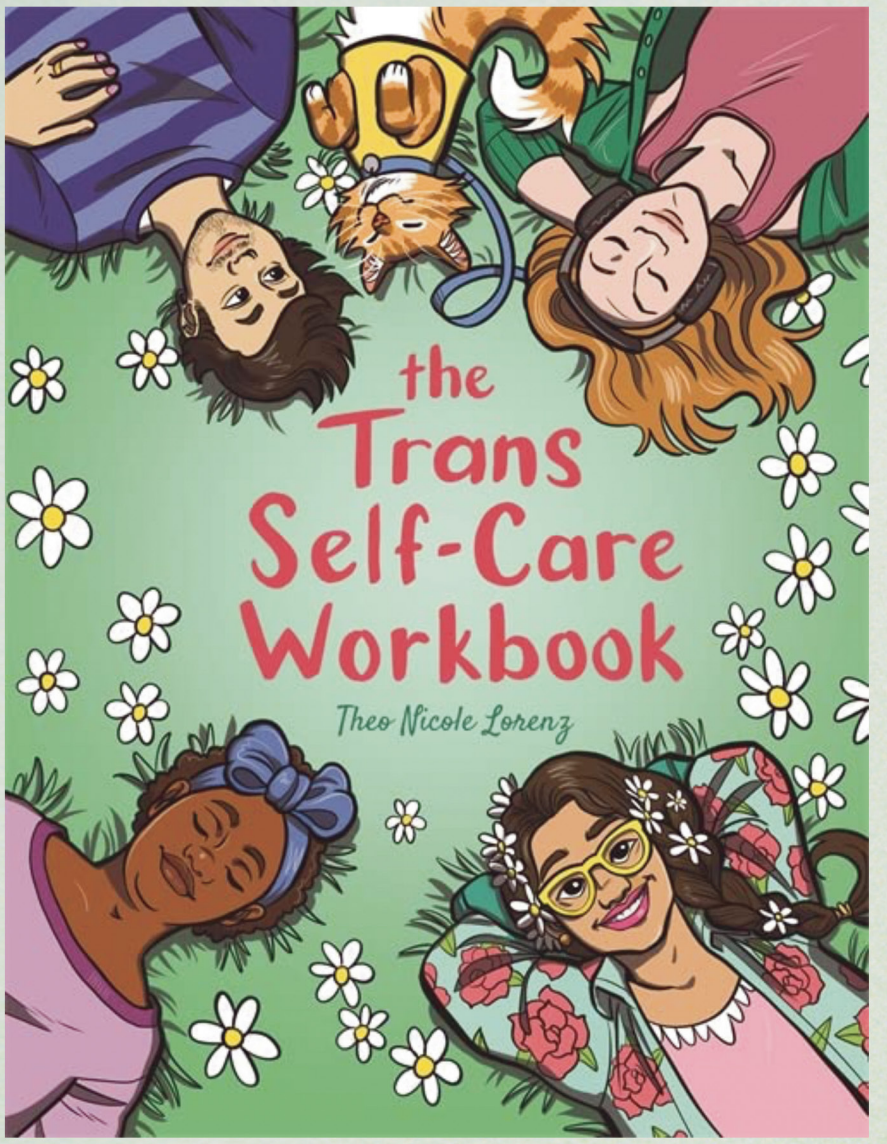

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Photo by Alister Mori

While acting seemed like a fairy-tale profession to Sheng, he admitted that he had "loved movies and television my entire life. In fourth grade, my parents would get mad at me for watching too much T.V.," he recalled.

"Part of my drive in this profession is fascination. Fascination, to be part of this world. I am always in a state of starstruck. I hesitate to even name-drop with my roommates because I feel like I'm never going to be in these spaces again," said Sheng. "I mean, I remember the first season of *L-Word*... my first major project, I'm walking around set just like, "Oh my gosh,"... and when Laurel (Holloman, who plays Tina Kennard in the show) came to the table read, I remember I walked in and I just kept muttering "Oh my god Laurel is here...." and Jac "(Jacqueline Toboni, who plays Sarah Finley) is like, "Dude, be cool!" and you know, I couldn't, I just couldn't."

I'VE ALWAYS FELT LIKE STORIES WERE REALLY IMPORTANT— TO BE ABLE TO TELL OUR STORIES ANY WAY WE CAN.

—LEO SHENG

Sheng describes playing Micah as a "dream" role.

"He's not trying to be this perfect piece of queer or trans representation. We're getting to see him be messy, and make mistakes, and he's vulnerable. He's just trying to do his best," said Sheng. "I think he's loyal. And I think that he really just wants people to be happy. He wants the people he loves to be cared for and safe. And I think that in this season in particular, we see him struggling with where his loyalties lie, and I think that's because he loves all of his friends equally. I think he's just got a really big heart and he doesn't want to ever do the wrong thing. But, I think that he gets in his own way sometimes."

Sheng is excited for audiences to see the kind of representation and storytelling on *Gen Q* that he had always yearned for. "For me, I'm not always talking about being a trans person, in everyday life. And I think that on *Gen Q* we, for lack of a better phrase, just want to normalize [transness], and make these conversations more common, especially among queer friend circles. Gender identity, gender, and sexuality are everyday parts of our lives. Even if we don't always talk about it.

"The original show had some challenges portraying trans masculine characters. Our show addresses a lot of those challenges. And it asks questions like, "how do we write trans masculine characters so that they exist convincingly in a world full of queer women? And how do we do it in a way where he is still very much himself and owning his identity and not feeling ostracized, I think in a way that Max [a transgender character from the original show] often was, unfortunately.

"How do we balance these conversations while showing a whole human so that the audience knows who he is without making his story only about [being trans]? I think that we have touched on really important parts of Micah's identity through the show's run thus far. His arc in season two, where we get to see him exploring what his queerness means to him outside of his own internal sense of gender, I can relate to a lot," Sheng said.

Watch The L-Word: Gen Q on Showtime or stream it on Hulu. For more of Leo Sheng, follow him on Instagram @ileosheng and catch him in the movie The Matrix Resurrections, now playing in theaters and streaming on HBO Max.

Fun Facts About Leo

Favorite scene to shoot in *Gen Q*: A tie between season one's pool scene with Micah and Josè, and season two's horseback riding scene with Maribel. "Micah is realizing he's into her and she has no idea, and I think there's something very sweet about him realizing that he can move past Josè and can continue to be honest and vulnerable with someone."

Hardest film to scene in *Gen Q*: A tie between any sex scene, even though the cast does work with intimacy coordinators, and season two's family lunch with Maribel because "I made one of the biggest rookie mistakes, and that was eating a ton of food the first take. People will say you don't have to eat every take. And that's true. You can chew and spit it out later, but I just went for it every take. I was so sick after that."

What superpower he would have: "I wanna fly," Sheng said, without hesitation. "And be super fast and super strong."

Last piece of queer art that inspired him: The revival of *Tales of the City.* "The character of Jake is transitioning and questioning what that means to him in terms of his attraction to other people. It really helped me understand my own queerness."

Last book that made him cry: *The Leavers* by Lisa Ko. "As an adoptee, the story that she wrote is just so beautiful and raw."

A movie that reminds him of childhood: *The Birdcage.* "I want to say that when I was a kid, I didn't understand maybe 70% of it, but I watched a lot of Robin Williams."

Favorite place to eat around town: Red Hawk Bar & Grill on State Street.

Best spot in Ypsi: "The water tower is an obvious choice, but anywhere in Depot Town is the best. I absolutely love being in Depot Town."

Actor he'd most like to collaborate with: A tie between Emma Thompson and Sandra Oh.

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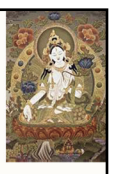

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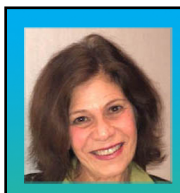

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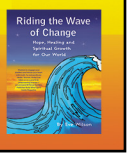

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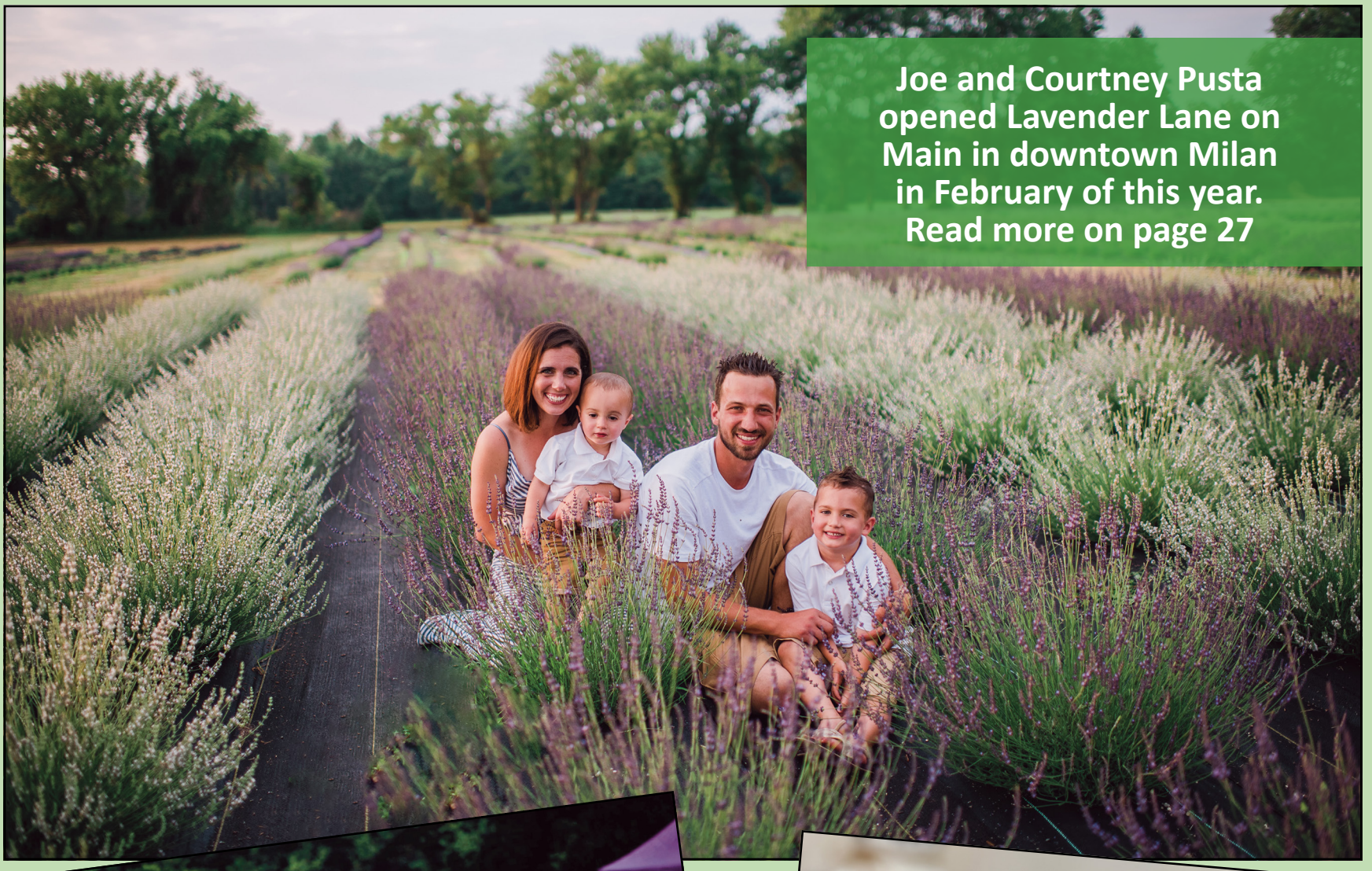
WHAT'S NEW IN THE COMMUNITY

By Lynda Gronlund

This ongoing column features upcoming events within Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County and surrounding areas' body/mind/spirit communities, new (during the past year or two) practitioners and holistic businesses, new books written by local/regional authors, new classes, as well as new offerings by established practitioners and holistic businesses.



Joe and Courtney Pusta opened Lavender Lane on Main in downtown Milan in February of this year.
Read more on page 27

New Offerings by Established Businesses and Practitioners

Ann Arbor's Integrative Healthcare Providers is seeking a new practitioner to join their collective.

The clinic, located on State Street, currently houses the practices of three primary care physicians, an acupuncturist, two mental health therapists, two massage therapists, and a nurse practitioner. Clinic owner Dr. Amy Saunders explained that the practitioners have their own practices but share a building, administrative and billing support, and refer patients to one another when appropriate. She described it as "an optimal balance of autonomy, administrative, and collegial support." The clinic has an excellent reputation in the Ann Arbor area and receives referrals from St. Joseph Mercy and University of Michigan Hospitals, as well as other primary care physicians in the community.

Saunders said that a good fit for a new practitioner should be someone interested in integrative medicine,vworking in a community of likeminded professionals, and could be a nutritionist, a manual therapist, a nurse practitioner, or other related professional. The clinic will receive some small upgrades in the near future, Saunders said, including a physical medicine bed. The clinic is ready to welcome a new colleague right away and hopes to be able to expand capacity for patient care in the near future.

Integrative Healthcare Providers is located at 2800 South State Street, Suite 215, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Its website is ihcpaa.com. Dr. Amy Saunders can be reached by phone at (734) 547-3990 or by email at office@ihcpaa.com.

Katy Gladwin is a mother, doula, childbirth educator, and a Certified Women's Health Coach.

She graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a degree in Human Biology/Pre-med. She found out about birth doulas during her final year in college and immediately sought training to become one. For the last decade she has supported over 300 families through doula services and childbirth education. In 2017 she started to shift her business to a coaching role (though she does intend to continue doula work) obtaining training and certifications through the Dr. Sears Wellness Institute and the Integrative Women's Health Institute, focusing on fertility, pregnancy and postpartum, looking at the whole person through a functional medicine lens and helping women "bring attention to their own intuition and ways of knowing" what is best for their bodies and lives. A lifelong student, she is currently enrolled in Aviva Romm's Herbal Medicine for Women program, and Kundalini Yoga Teacher training. She draws greatly from her own experiences as a woman and mother, seeing how nutrition, rest, mindfulness, and other practices can affect her mood, energy, health, and happiness.

Gladwin describes her role as that of a "guide," helping women discover their own way forward, as everyone's journey will be different. She specializes in the childbearing year, but can also help with digestive issues, energy, adrenal fatigue, and other issues women face. Sometimes, she explained this work can involve blood tests and lab work, and sometimes it is simply a matter of trial and error with different modalities and habits. Food, sleep, movement, community, supplements and herbs, and emotional and mental resilience are all areas she looks at to help women achieve their optimal level of health. She will generally meet with women once a week to work with them in-depth and understand their progress, setbacks, and journey with them, providing accountability and helping with problem-solving. She is flexible with those for whom weekly meetings aren't practical.

Gladwin lives on a 10-acre wooded property with a creek in Ypsilanti with her two- and eight-year-old children, her husband, a cat, and a dog. She is a strong believer in "autonomy and intuition," and said she believes that "when we allow women to trust those things that is where the magic happens."

Gladwin also recently finished designing her Resilient Mother Course, a six-week journey in preparation for the postpartum period, which will be offered soon; see her website for dates as they are announced.

Katy Gladwin is online at sacredrootshealing.org, where prospective clients can book a consultation with her. She can be reached by email at katygladwin@gmail.com.

Continued on page 27

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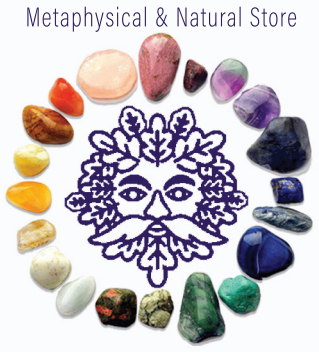

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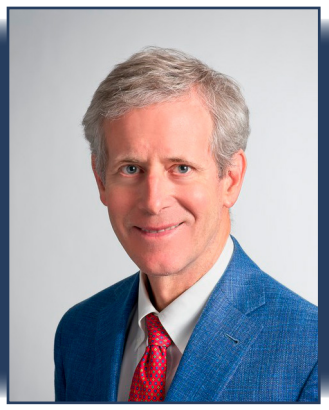

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE COMMUNITY

Continued from page 25

Joe and Courtney Pusta opened Lavender Lane on Main in downtown Milan in February of this year.

The shop is an extension of the organic lavender farm the Pustas founded in Milan in 2016. They have seven acres of lavender with about 7,000 plants and are expanding their fields with every growing season. The couple is passionate about the many uses for lavender, from its visual beauty to its soothing fragrance, to its culinary and therapeutic applications. Lavender Lane on Main allows them to bring the bath, beauty, and home products from the farm's gift shop to customers year-round.

Joe formulates the shop's products and has an endless supply of product testers in friends and family. They offer dried lavender for decoration and fragrance, lavender essential oil, linen sprays, body sprays, candles, food products like lavender-infused honey and maple syrup, plain culinary lavender for customers to add to their own recipes, beauty and hair products, children's bath and body products, pet shampoo, and more. They also have a lavender plus CBD line for a variety of uses such as pain relief and anxiety reduction. Joe said they carry around 70 products, all handcrafted by the family. Products can also be purchased online year-round.

The farm itself, open seasonally, offers "U-Pick" lavender, lavender plants, dried flowers, lavender lemonade, and all the products sold at the Main Street location in its gift shop. People can book photo sessions when the lavender is at its peak beauty in the summer, and they host an annual Lavender Festival in July. This year's festival will be their fifth, held on July 9th, and will include a lavender smoked barbeque, as well as hosting a variety of local vendors.

Joe said that he was first attracted to working with lavender because of the "response that people have to it—they light up!" It is so versatile, has so many uses, and is so popular that he felt it was a perfect pursuit. He is a self-taught farmer and product formulator and said he has always been interested in science. Prior to the farm his background was in remodeling homes and teaching, and he has a degree in political science. Courtney is still a schoolteacher in Ann Arbor, and she handles the farm and shops' event planning and customer service. The couple's young sons, Jonas and Luka, love to help out as well.

Lavender Lane on Main is located at 12 East Main, Milan, MI 4160. The farm is located at 12040 Plank, Milan, MI 48160. More information is online at lavenderlanemi.com. Joe and Courtney Pusta can be reached by phone at (734) 239-2213 or by email at joe@lavenderlanemi.com.

Upcoming Events

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Holler Fest will return to Brooklyn, Michigan's Frog Holler Farm on August 26 through 28, 2022.

Holler Fest is a "farm, music and arts festival" run by the King family, who have owned and operated Frog Holler Farm (not related to the Frog Holler Produce company which also operates in the Ann Arbor area) for over 45 years.

Cathy King said that the lineup of musicians is still being determined, but that every musician who was scheduled to play in 2020 and still desires to will be able to play. In addition, there are several local favorites who will likely perform. The festival has always been very child-friendly, she said, with kids' activities provided by volunteers from the local community. The "Holler Kitchen" will provide all plant-based and mostly organic meals from Frog Holler and other local farms. There will also be food vendors on hand. Attendees can camp onsite or commute.

Regarding Covid safety, King said that the festival has always been mostly outdoors, and that if necessitated by high case numbers, they will close the one indoor venue. Tickets will be available online starting in June, when the music and event lineup will also be available. Tickets are also available at the gate. Volunteer opportunities will be posted in June as well. Vendors interested in working the event can contact the King family via the website. In 2019 King estimated that the Farm hosted close to 2000 guests coming and going throughout the weekend.

King said that in 2020, the family was "shocked they had to cancel," and that in 2021 there was some relief once they "accepted they had to cancel." This year, she said, they plan to move full speed ahead, but only if conditions are such that they feel they can safely host the festival. "We just want everyone to feel safe and comfortable," she said, and emphasized that the festival is "a collaboration between us and the land and the community."

The most up-to-date information is available on the festival's facebook page: facebook.com/HollerFest. The website is at https://hollerfest.com. Frog Holler Farm is a working organic vegetable farm located at 11811 Beech Road, Brooklyn, MI 49230. Produce from the farm is available at their Ann Arbor Farmer's Market stall. The King family can be reached at kings@hollerfest.com.

After two years of online-only events due to the pandemic, the 2022 Great Lakes Herb Faire will return to an in-person gathering on September 9 through 11 at the Cedar lake Outdoor Center in Chelsea.

This will be the Faire's eighth year. It is centered around the sharing of herbal knowledge and celebrating the community and plants of our bio-region. Logistics Coordinator Sarah Williams said the event has drawn over 300 people in past years, with speakers and teachers from the Great Lakes region and a few from outside the area. People from all levels of experience with herbalism attend and are welcome, she explained, but she emphasized that the Faire is very accessible and welcoming to "the family herbalist; the community herbalist," and beginners. It is also family-friendly, with classes and activities for children. All classes are categorized as beginner, intermediate, or advanced, so attendees can plan their attendance accordingly.

While Williams said the virtual events were very successful, the organizers are very much looking forward to being back with the land, and the plants, and in-person with the community that has been built through this annual event. The Outdoor Center's trails offer lots of opportunities for up-close interaction with the plants they are learning about in their natural presentation.

Most attendees camp, though some commute from their nearby homes or stay in nearby hotels. In order to stay as Covid-safe as possible, Williams said that meals will be served outdoors on biodegradable, but disposable, serving ware. The only indoor area will be the bathrooms, where windows will be kept open to maximize airflow. Olatokunboh Obasi will be a keynote speaker. She is the founder of the Well of Indigenous Wisdom for herbal medicine and African cosmology, and the Puerto Rico coordinator for Herbalists Without Borders International. She also owns Omaroti, a wellness shop specializing in plant medicines, and is a birth doula, yoga and dance instructor, author, presenter, and healer.

Other teachers include local favorite Jim McDonald; Nathan Wright from Petoskey, who is an Indigenous herbalist and activist who has been active in the movement to shut down Line 5 in the Straights of Mackinaw; Margi Flint from Marblehead, Massachusetts, author of the herbalist textbook *The Practicing Herbalist: Meeting With Clients, Reading the Body*; and many more.

Locally sourced meals are served throughout the weekend, with vegetarian, vegan, and omnivorous options, and food sensitivities and allergies are gladly accommodated. The Faire also has a vendor marketplace with regionally made, high-quality products. Vendor applications are being taken until August 10.
The Faire does offer a work-exchange program, with half of volunteers' registration reimbursed after they complete their agreed-upon shifts. Prior to the opening of the main Faire on Friday morning, two four-hour intensives are being offered—these can be registered for separately; you do not need to attend the whole Faire in order to attend an Intensive. The Botany Intensive is taught by Cal Janae Wolfpack, and the "Joy and Curse of Reading the Body" intensive is taught by Margi Flint.

More information and registration is available at greatlakesherbfaire.org. Faire organizers can be reached by email at info@greatlakesherbfaire.org. The Cedar Lake Outdoor Center is located at 250 Pierce Road, Chelsea, MI 48118.

Continued on page 28

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COMMUNITY

Continued from page 27

The Kerrytown Book Fest will return after a three-year pause on September 18, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Morris Lawrence Building at Washtenaw Community College.

The Book Fest is intended to celebrate the local area's heritage in bookmaking and printing arts and to highlight local businesses, organizations, and individuals. The Book Fest was on hiatus during the 2019 season due to turnover on its board and was not held in 2020 or 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The festival's finance chair and secretary Kelly Ogden-Schuette said there will be a variety of panels and exhibitions for attendees to enjoy. One area is dedicated to children's and young adult programming. There are crafts demonstrations, such as a bookbinding how-to, author presentations, and vendors including bookstores, printers, bookbinders, illustrators, educational organizations, and others. Different panels will be offered concurrently in separate areas, so attendees will have options throughout the day for education, entertainment, and hands-on experiences.

The Book Fest was previously held in the Ann Arbor Farmers Market and has drawn up to 2000 attendees in the past; since the organizers were not able to secure a date with the Farmers Market the decision was made to move to WCC for this season. More information will be available online as the programming is finalized.

The most up-to-date information is at the Book Fest's Facebook page: facebook.com/kerrytownbookfest. The website is ktbookfest.org and the organizers can be reached via the contact form.

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New Practitioners and Businesses

Samantha Oetting opened Bodhi Work Massage Therapy Studio on State Street in Ann Arbor in December of 2020.

Since then, she has been able to grow her practice to what she called the "point of liberation" being able to transition out of her nine to five job as a paralegal. She offers Thai massage, traditional Swedish massage, and half-hour neck and shoulder massage for those who need a quick break. She is also a certified Aerial Yoga instructor, and teaches Aerial Yoga, runs community yoga events, and offers continuing education for licensed massage therapists and yoga teachers. In June, Bodhi Work is hosting a 40-hour Traditional Thai Massage Training taught by Sarah Cheiky which is approved by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork for continuing education credits.

Oetting said that her interest in bodywork began while she was working as a paralegal in medical malpractice. The job was stressful, and she used massage as a part of her self-care. She also "eventually got consistent" with yoga, which was a change from the weightlifting she had pursued while in college. At first, she said, the hot yoga classes at her gym were just a physical outlet, but she eventually became interested in the spiritual aspects of the practice.

In 2018, Oetting was rejected from Cleveland State University's Law School. Deciding she needed a complete life reboot, she decided to move home to Michigan with her parents and pour all of the effort she would have put into becoming a lawyer into holistic healing and yoga. She got a job at the University of Michigan in Legal Services and took a 300-hour Yoga Teacher certification. She also trained in Aerial Yoga at Ann Arbor's Ringstar Studio. She learned all she could about anatomy, the subtle body, chakras, and energy. Along the way she realized that public speaking and presenting to a group of people was difficult for her, but she had a natural talent for physical assists during yoga teaching. She met a woman who was both a yoga teacher and a bodyworker, who asked if she had ever considered becoming a massage therapist. This turned out to be the perfect fit.

In June of 2019 Oetting started massage school, and though the pandemic delayed her gradation, she was able to complete her licensure in 2020. She credits her former legal career with setting her up to be a successful entrepreneur, but is thankful that she shifted gears, as she said desk work ultimately was not for her. She is passionate about "helping humanity come to rest," and about safe touch. She said that two years of social distancing has caused touch starvation in many of us, and that massage therapy can help normalize physical touch as a healthy way of connecting with others.

Despite opening her studio in the middle of the pandemic, Oetting said there have been no outbreaks there and that she has not had Covid herself. Now, she said, her income has surpassed what she was making at the University, and she has a steady flow of clients, new and old. She recently received training in massage for oncology, and she wants to do some hospice work, inspired by her mother who is a hospice worker. She feels very motivated to invest in and be part of the Ann Arbor community, helping "provide rest" to people who need it.

Bodhi Work Massage Therapy Studio is located at 304 1/2 South State Street Suite G, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Appointments can be booked online at bodhi-work.com. Samantha Oetting can be reached by phone at (734)210-0488 or by email at info@bodhi-work.com.

Emily Adama purchased the former Grass Lake Sanctuary in Manchester to form EarthWell Retreat Center and Nature Sanctuary in October of 2021.

It opened in January for personal retreats, starting with a yoga and meditation weekend for mental health professionals. Adama has a background as a social worker and was a resident at Ann Arbor's Zen Buddhist Temple while studying for her master's degree. She teaches yoga, meditation, and mindfulness, and said that while she loved the Temple in Ann Arbor, she felt a desire for a more immersive natural setting. She knew other teachers in the area wanted a place close enough to Ann Arbor for convenience, but remote enough to be a place of retreat from the larger world, for multi-day retreats and events. She also had an interest and background in organic farming and permaculture. When she became aware that the Grass Lake Sanctuary property was on the market, she knew it would be a great fit for what she envisioned.

Continued on page 31

Where Do We Distribute The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal?

6,000 copies of The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal are distributed to more than 235 locations in the Ann Arbor area, including Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, Castle Remedies at the Parkway Center, the Food Co-op, Kerrytown, Nicola's, the Zen Temple, Sweetwaters, Pharmacy Solutions, Michigan Union, the Better Health Store, North Campus Commons, U-M, EMU, WCC, Arbor Farms, the Center for Sacred Living, Complete Chiropractic, the Lighthouse Center, Jewel Heart, Tsogyelgar, Yoga Space, Michigan Theater, Seva, Clark Pharmacy, and the Weber Center.

We also distribute to the offices of dozens of doctors, holistic health care providers and therapists.

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE COMMUNITY

Continued from page 28

The property is 40 acres surrounded by a 100-acre nature preserve owned by Washtenaw County. Some of the nature preserve consists of farmable fields, which EarthWell has a cooperative use contract with the county to use for organic farming. Adama said the team is looking for young organic farmers who are interested in learning and working the land. The previous landowners had developed a permaculture plan for the site, including things like nut trees that will fit well within the makeup of "mostly prairie, wetland, and forest," which Adama hopes to implement a little at a time. She said that the previous owners had done a lot of invasive species removal and other preparation to make way for the eventual culmination of the plan.

The property has miles of trails, a spring-fed swimming pond, large gathering space with community kitchen and dining space, bathrooms and showers. There are six off-grid sleeping cabins. Adama said that the township has approved up to 25 cabins, but the property will need upgrades in water and septic to be able to support them, so adding more will be a longer-term project.

Adama has partnered with Miriam Dowd-Eller as Earthwell's Hospitality Manager, and Britten Stringwell, as its seasonal Onsite Caretaker. Dowd-Eller is a licensed massage therapist, yoga and somatic movement teacher, and holistic postpartum care professional. She will assist people with booking personal group retreats, and with venue rentals. She will also be leading some retreat weekends, offering private bodywork sessions, and leading yoga classes at some retreats. Stringwell has a background in environment and behavior, and art/design. She is also an herbalist.

Earthwell has a partnership with Roaming Goat Café, a farm-to-table café and caterer, which can provide individual meals for private retreats or cater larger events.

Upcoming public events at EarthWell include a Full Moon Kirtan on May 14—a free, non-sectarian community yogic chanting event led by Trever Eller; a one-day yoga and mindfulness Retreat for mental health professionals on May 28; and a summer solstice women's retreat on June 10 and 11 led by Megan Sims and Emily Adama which will include yoga, mindfulness meditation, NIA dance, journaling, and process groups.

Information on public events, and details for personal retreats and rental for teachers wishing to host retreats at the Center are online at earthwellretreat.com. EarthWell Retreat Center and Nature Sanctuary can be reached by email at hello@earthwellretreat.com or by phone at (989) 442-6779. The Center is located at 18580 Grass Lake Road, Manchester, MI 48158.

Tanet and Roderick Casey opened The Conjure Goddess, a metaphysical supply shop, in downtown Ypsilanti on October 29, 2021, just in time for Halloween.

Tanet said it has always been her dream to own and run a metaphysical shop. She started her spiritual path as a Wiccan and branched out to learn and work with many different paths and practices. She previously worked in retail at Lush, a handmade bath, skincare, haircare, and cosmetics company, where she set out to learn every aspect of running a store. The Caseys opened their metaphysical supply business online five years ago and built a strong following of customers locally and across the country. Roderick, who was previously working in car sales, was able to make the online shop his full-time work, followed later on by Tanet as their following grew. In 2021 they found the perfect storefront to start serving local customers in person, fulfilling Tanet's longtime goal. She said that she used to buy candles from the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore and mindfully burn them while setting intentions with the plan to manifest her desired outcomes, which she believes helped her bring this dream to fruition.

The Conjure Goddess carries a variety of spiritual items, some of which are not widely found in Michigan. They have a huge selection of "7-day candles" or conjure candles—tall glass jar candles made with a specific purpose in mind. There are candles for money drawing, success, luck, protection, and confidence, candles to honor specific deities or spirits, and candles for specific moon phases and zodiac signs. Some of the candles are made by the Caseys and their staff under the Conjure Goddess brand in their warehouse in Ypsilanti Township. They also handmake conjure oils, intentional or ritual soaps, herbal baths, sprays, and body care items. The store offers their own brand as well as other brands. They carry crystals, tarot cards, essential oils, a variety of herbs and herbal teas, a few books, and ritual kits. There is a large selection of spiritual waters, the most well-known being Florida Water. Roderick explained that these waters can be used for cleansing, repelling negativity, cleansing magical tools, as offerings to Orishas or deities, or to attract prosperity, love, and more.

Tanet said that a lot of spiritual paths intermix and use some of the same materials. Practitioners of Wicca and Voodoo, people who are interested in spiritual manifestation, those on their own path, and people simply interested in self-care and self-awareness can all find useful and interesting items in the store. She said that it is important to her for the store to be a place of education and community in these spiritual practices. "This is a spiritual safe place," she said. "Anyone is welcome." They also offer tarot and psychic readings, and events such as a Witch's Retreat, a three-day retreat they have hosted in different parts of the country offering classes in tarot, candle magic, reiki, and a variety of other activities, along with a welcoming "traditional coven-like" experience to help practitioners feel more connected with likeminded people.

The Conjure Goddess shop is located at 226 West Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. They are online at theconjuregoddess.net, and can be reached by email at theconjuregoddess@gmail.com or by phone at (734) 961-7638.

Ypsilanti-based therapist Katie Gordon, LMSW, started her private practice, Solas Counseling, in 2020.

Prior to this, she worked in a variety of settings providing mental health care. After graduating from the University of Michigan's School of Social Work in 2007, she interned with a psychiatric hospital and with an adoption and foster care organization. After receiving full licensure in 2009, she worked for several organizations including Dawn Farm, a substance abuse treatment center in Ann Arbor. More recently she was a therapist and clinical director for a local counseling group for two years before deciding to start her independent practice.

"I wanted the ability to craft what I want," she said, as well as the "flexibility and ownership." The work of being independent is hard, she explained, but "the hard work is mine, and I get to be proud of it."

The name "Solas" comes from the Gaelic word for light. Gordon said she has always loved lighthouses and what they represent—a light to guide ships through the night and the storm. She said that her goal is to be a light to others and to help reflect their light back to them, even when it has been dimmed. Gordon specializes in helping people experiencing anxiety, depression, and trauma. She is well-versed in assisting people with relationship issues, substance abuse and addiction, codependency, stress, domestic violence and abuse cycles, grief, and adoption. She was originally drawn to psychology because of her interest in adoption and foster care, as the sister of an adopted child.

She currently offers telehealth sessions (therapy via an online video platform) and does accept some insurance including Blue Cross Blue Shield. She also works with Open Path Collective which offers sliding scale therapy fees based on financial need. To those looking for help, she said "it takes courage to reach out, but it probably won't be as scary as you think." She also stressed that if one therapist isn't a good fit, to keep looking. "Someone will be able to help," she said.

More information is available online at solas-counseling.com. Katie Gordon can be reached by email at katie@solas-counseling.com or by phone at (734) 572-6975.

Submit your listing for the September through December 2022 issue.

Please note that the "What's New in the Community" column is part of the editorial (not paid-for-advertising) part of the CW Journal, and the editors may or may not include what you submit. Whether the editors include material or not will depend on space considerations, as well as other editorial issues, such as the need for high resolution jpgs and the overall mix of stories included in the "What's New in the Community" column in a given issue.

If you would like to submit information to be considered for this column, please email communitynews@crazywisdom.net, or drop off or mail information to the store: What's New in the Community, 114 South Main, Ann Arbor, MI, 48104. The firm deadline for submissions for the next issue (Sept. thru Dec. 2022) is July 1, 2022.

Crysta Goes Visiting

In this column, Crysta Coburn writes about crazywisdom-esque people and happenings around Ann Arbor.

Gail Piepenburg and Her Beautiful Fairy Houses

"I grew up in the metro Detroit area 'burbs surrounded by lots of kids, in a neighborhood of fields, meadows, and streams ripe for adventure," said ceramic artist Gail Piepenburg. She later moved to Ann Arbor with her husband, who is also an artist. "We both fell in love with a piece of property on a dirt road near the river with trails. It was a place we could build on using our creativity and skill. It had room for an art studio. We both value how creative and diverse people in a community contribute to making a place more interesting and often beautiful. The historic architectural buildings, the quirky places, individual businesses, the varied restaurants, close to nature, all made it a city with visual appeal to live in."

Piepenburg's parents taught their children many life skills and hands-on skills such as sewing, baking, painting, gardening, and working with wood and metal. "So, learning to work with clay was an easy fit for me," she said. "I simply took classes in ceramics after my own children were born."

The fairy houses are a marriage between ceramics and her interest in gardening. Piepenburg explained, "I've worked in and taught art in the public schools for over 25 years now. But it was my garden and an invitation to be part of the Ann Arbor Garden Walk that started me on the fairy house project. Twice my garden was selected to be included on the garden tour as well as having our ceramic studio open to visitors."

After brainstorming ceramics that would appeal to gardeners, she decided "whimsical fairy houses would fit perfectly." She shared, "This side project blossomed into an annual event in which I make fairy houses for the A2 Garden Walk specifically. Each year the houses continue to evolve in design, and I display and sell them in a different garden [every year] at their event."

The fairy houses, which come in various shapes, are so fun and colorful, they really do make the perfect addition to any yard or garden. What a delightful discovery for people to make while out on a walk in the neighborhood!

The fairy houses, which come in various shapes, are so fun and colorful, they really do make the perfect addition to any yard or garden. What a delightful discovery for people to make while out on a walk in the neighborhood!

And where do the ideas for her artwork come from? "I have to say I can find inspiration nearly everywhere, it's how we choose to look at something that shifts our view," Piepenburg said. "I am drawn to the rich experiences of travel. Architecture and detail. Cultures and history. Imagination. Creativity. Good design. Burning Man artists and my daughter's ethereal photographs. My husband's creativity and his inspired suggestions. My youngest daughter, who truly 'loves what she does.' They all nourish me, and I am in awe of them."

During the second week of June, you can find Piepenburg at the Ann Arbor Garden Walk in one of the beautiful gardens. If you're interested in one of her houses or other works of art, contact her for a tour of the studio.

Find Gail Piepenburg online at instagram.com/fairytalehouses/. You can find her work for sale at Two Fish Gallery in Leland, Michigan. She can be contacted by emailing Gpiepenburg@gmail.com or texting (734) 834-7117.

Using Your Psychic Abilities with Beverly Fish

Beverly Fish has led an interesting life. Mother, teacher, grandmother, astrologer, psychic, demonologist… Fish has seen more than most!

Her first encounter with the paranormal was when she was a child. One day she found herself wishing that her house was haunted (an exciting prospect for many children), when a ball was thrown at her head. But no one was in the room with her, so where did the ball come from, and who threw it? She went downstairs to tell her mother she thought their house was, in fact, haunted. Her mother told her not to tell anyone, which Fish took as confirmation. As she grew, she and her sister, who also inherited the family's psychic gift, became acquainted with their ghost, a friendly

young man whom they named George. “George became part of the family,” Fish told me. She was sad when the family eventually sold the house and moved away, leaving George behind.

In the 1970s, Fish became interested in astrology, but it wasn’t until 20 years later that this led to something special. While teaching humanities classes at Washtenaw Community College, an interesting email was sent out to staff from the new person in charge of community education. Fish said, “It asked if anybody is into astrology or pure parapsychology or anything paranormal. And I thought, should I answer that or not? I thought that was like coming out of the closet for me as a paranormal person.”

It turns out that a predisposition to psychic ability is actually visible in a person’s astrological birth chart.

Fish responded to the email in the affirmative, then she met in person with the woman who had sent it. The woman was so impressed by Fish’s abilities that they decided together to create a Develop Your Psychic Ability class that Fish taught. “The biggest thing I think everybody needs to tap into is their spirit guides. Get in touch with that first.” It was her spirit guides that led Fish to develop her own abilities and use them to help people in different ways.

It turns out that a predisposition to psychic ability is actually visible in a person’s astrological birth chart. Pisces and Cancer, both water signs, are particularly sensitive, and Fish worries when she sees one at the center of paranormal activity. They often don’t have the proper tools to withstand the energy. Whenever she is asked to assist on a potential haunting, Fish studies the birth charts of the people involved for potential insight.

She said that many of the spirits she finds are just loved ones checking in or otherwise benign spirits that are attached to the building or land, like George. But when activity is particularly harmful, especially if a child is involved, Fish offers her expertise to help rectify the situation.

“Everything is connected,” Fish said. Whatever tools you have at your disposal can be honed and utilized. And don’t forget your spirit guides!

Book a reading with Beverly Fish at evenstarschalice.com. She can be contacted via email at beverly.fish@comcast.net.

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Printmaking with a.mess.of.photos’ Mary Getz

Local printmaker Mary Getz grew up near Lake Michigan in beautiful Berrien County, Michigan. She has since settled in Clinton with her husband and young son. She told me, “I originally came to Ann Arbor for college at U of M and graduated with a BA in Psychology and Women’s Studies in 2008. I then worked as an advisor at a democratic free school I co-founded and as a direct care worker for people with disabilities. I had to stop working in 2013 due to an increase in illness from my genetic condition, Cystic Fibrosis.”

Getz’s first foray into art was through the camera lens. “I was a very stubborn young adult and got started in photography right before the switch to digital from film. I had just purchased a very nice film camera when film and developing became much harder to come by. I refused to spend more money on a nice digital camera, because I had a perfectly good film camera!” This is where the name a.mess.of.photos comes from. She slowed down when she became more occupied by school, work, and attending to her health.

“I spent a few years not creating much and focusing exclusively on my health,” she said. “By the time I got pregnant with my son, my health had improved a bit, and I was able to spend more time on art/creating. I decided I wanted to try printmaking, so I purchased a starter kit and did my first print, a couple of morel mushrooms, that turned out better than I was expecting!” Getz fell in love.

Printmaking involves “carving an image onto the block, and seeing the idea come to life on paper.” Getz is “mostly self-taught, with some help from the printmaking community on instagram.” She decided to keep the name a.mess.of.photos because, “I think it truly represents who I am as a person—messy and creative. It also describes my printmaking—most of my ideas start as photos, and the process of creating a print is messy—lots of little scraps of carved lino and ink smears.”

Getz is inspired by “compassion, authenticity, and the raw, real stuff of life,” but when it comes to her art, she uses a different tactic.

Getz is inspired by “compassion, authenticity, and the raw, real stuff of life,” but when it comes to her art, she uses a different tactic. “My art takes a more conceptual approach: it’s about the process, getting in the zone, and the actual act of creating. A lot of my most popular prints or creations come from my interest in learning more about myself and the things that I enjoy, such as learning about my Potawatomi heritage and language, creating custom home prints, or recreating a vintage pattern I love.”

She hopes that her creations “spark a bit of joy or connection with other people. I love to hear about where my creations end up, or the reason a customer purchased a particular item.”

Find Mary Getz online at amessofphotosart.com and instagram.com/a.mess.of.photos/. She can be reached by email at amessofphotosart@gmail.com.

LEAPS OF FAITH

TALES OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

By Laurel Decker

This column is a look at a brave soul who took a leap of faith to open his own businesses. What follows is a personal profile of Eric Parkhurst who is following his dreams and thriving despite the odds—and Covid.

Winewood Organics

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In many Michigan households, marijuana is a part of daily life for a variety of reasons. But in the spring of 2020, users feared they might lose access to the growers and sellers that provided it for them. With the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, only businesses that were regarded as essential were allowed to operate. Eric Parkhurst was among those waiting to hear whether lawmakers would recognize how essential it was for Michiganders to maintain their access to marijuana.

Before ever hearing the word "coronavirus," Parkhurst had been growing organic marijuana plants as medicine for over ten years. With the legalization of recreational use in December of 2018, Parkhurst began working toward opening a dispensary.

I recently sat down to interview Parkhurst to learn why he chose what seemed to be the most inconvenient time possible to open the doors of Winewood Organics—a business he describes as "part farm, part hash lab, part dispensary." I wanted to find out what challenges he faced as a new small business dealing with the pandemic. I was also curious to know if there were any unique positives that came from opening a small business during the pandemic.

Before ever hearing the word "coronavirus," Parkhurst had been growing organic marijuana plants as medicine for over ten years. With the legalization of recreational use in December of 2018, Parkhurst began working toward opening a dispensary. As you can imagine, there was a lot of red tape and licensing that went along with that process. He persisted and, along with support from close friends and family, set up Winewood Organics using a microbusiness model. This meant they would "only sell products that were grown and produced on-site with our own hands."

The only choice was to focus on growing and production while he waited for mandates to lift. He says they "went into full scale production mode" and made the most of the time they had to grow and process.

But shortly after Parkhurst was approved for a license to open a dispensary in Ann Arbor, the Covid-19 virus picked up momentum throughout the state of Michigan. Positive cases spiked. Knowing the potential for state mandates to halt commerce, political advocates for cannabis use began asking lawmakers to recognize the need for dispensaries to stay open.

Eric Parkhurst, Winewood Founder/Grower, and staffer Kim Smith

Robin Schneider, executive director of the Michigan Cannabis Industry Association (MiCIA), wrote a letter to Governor Gretchen Whitmer letting her know how necessary cannabis was to Michigan users. In it, she pointed out that "Studies have shown that cannabis can reduce anxiety and stress and we believe continued access to this product during this time is pertinent. More importantly, patients with cancer, AIDS, chronic pain, seizures, and pediatric patients have reduced or replaced pharmaceuticals, including opiates, with medical cannabis."

Schneider was heard, and on March 23rd, 2020, Governor Gretchen Whitmer further legitimized Michigan's cannabis industry by classifying dispensaries as essential businesses. Parkhurst celebrated the news and continued to plan the dispensary addition.

But, there was a problem. To prevent the spread of Covid, Governor Whitmer ordered most other businesses to close and workers to "stay home, stay safe." Parkhurst explained that even though he had been approved to sell his products, "inspections and licenses were delayed because of Covid, so that was a hurdle that set us back, because all of the dispensaries had been licensed within the last couple of years. So, people had their places set up before the first mandates shut everything down."

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True to her academic background, Smith compiled the binders Parkhurst was holding, which contained profiles of every plant he grows, including its history all the way back to its mother plant. This allows Parkhurst to be very intentional about the flower buds that are produced from each strain.

The only choice was to focus on growing and production while he waited for mandates to lift. He says they "went into full scale production mode" and made the most of the time they had to grow and process. They decided to hire extra help so they would have plenty of product ready for when the dispensary opened.

But now that they wanted to hire people, the big question was whether or not people wanted to work. Some people didn't feel safe enough to work using a mask and social distancing guidelines. Others liked the time out from work all together, and they were able to stay home with the support of government assistance that was offered because of the pandemic. Employment was becoming a whole new challenge for all businesses owners regardless of their size, and Parkhurst assumed Winewood Organics would be affected as well.

Parkhurst thought they "might have a few responses if we were lucky." But, he took a chance anyway and posted an ad on Indeed. To his surprise, he had 55 applicants on the first day–500 after a week. And that wasn't the biggest surprise. With so many quality applicants to choose from, Winewood Organics gained employees who were skilled in industries that were scaling back, such as kitchens and restaurants. They also hired an engineer who seized the opportunity to make a complete career change. He simply wanted to work in an industry he felt passionate about. Kim Smith was one of the people hired from the Indeed post. She welcomed me in for the interview and we chatted while she tidied up the store front and opened the store for the day.

And I realized that with so much uncertainty surrounding the virus strains, now more than ever we need companies like Winewood Organics. Companies that are self-reliant and locally owned and know what it means to provide for a clientele that needs them even in the worst of circumstances, even if that circumstance is a global pandemic.

During our interview in the office, Parkhurst pulled out a set of binders that were bursting with photos and data. As he explained how terpenes create the flavors in cannabis, he told me that Smith is a Harvard graduate turned edible chef and that her knowledge and skill with combining flavors quickly earned her the nickname "The Terpene Queen." True to her academic background, Smith compiled the binders Parkhurst was holding, which contained profiles of every plant he grows, including its history all the way back to its mother plant. This allows Parkhurst to be very intentional about the flower buds that are produced from each strain. He explained that when it comes to customizing cannabis, "It's all in the genetics, so the better we grow it, the more cannabinoids that are produced by the plant. We can't manipulate the flower once it's out. It's a matter of growing it with precision."

While describing why precision is so crucial when growing medical cannabis, Parkhurst brought up a customer who has Multiple Sclerosis. She regularly buys a flower strain that he grows to help with appetite and sleep. He added, "When you have the mother plant, you can keep a profile that is specific and reliable, which is especially important when growing for someone with a chronic illness." She is only one example of the many individuals he grows for. I noted that his dedication to growing healthy, organic plants has a lot to do with wanting to provide a reliable and natural remedy for the people who depend on his plants.

When running a business, there has to be a financial focus as well. Parkhurst has a microbusiness license, which means that his company will "only sell what we plant, grow, trim, and pack with our own hands." It also means they are only allowed to grow 150 plants at a time. So, each plant is critical to keeping Winewood Organics operating. One stipulation of having a seller's license is that products are tested for safety and accuracy. We left the office and walked to an area where a scientist from a local lab had arrived to do just that.

Parkhurst showed me large bags of freshly dried marijuana buds and stacks of edible trays, and he pointed out that, "Testing is expensive and it's important to grow a lot and have it ready for the tests. That's an Issue with being a small business, because corporate growers have more money and more plants growing at the same time than we do." He added that there are only a few dispensaries left in the area that haven't been bought up by a big cannabis company.

As I listened to Parkhurst, I thought about the supply chain shortage that was impacting the country directly because of the pandemic. I remembered the last time I stopped at a drive thru with my daughters. My girls complained about how long it was taking to get the food that would have taken a few minutes to get pre-Covid. The restaurant chain was short staffed, and they were out of several familiar items we asked for because their suppliers simply could not provide them at the moment. They either didn't have anyone to grow the products, or they didn't have anyone to transport them. I wondered about how the larger cannabis companies might have been impacted by the supply chain shortage.

After our interview, Smith walked me to the front of the store where she showed me the variety of products that began as plants in the same building where they were being sold. I said my goodbyes and noticed I had just enough time to grab a quick snack before my next appointment. But instead of stopping at a chain where the wait might make me late, I reached into a bag I had packed ahead of time. By now I knew it wasn't a guarantee that I could access the conveniences I once had before the Covid-19 pandemic. And I realized that with so much uncertainty surrounding the virus strains, now more than ever we need companies like Winewood Organics. Companies that are self-reliant and locally owned and know what it means to provide for a clientele that needs them even in the worst of circumstances, even if that circumstance is a global pandemic.

Pursuing Detroit's Hidden Gems

TOLD IN TWO VOICES

Story and Photos By Hilary Nichols and Omar Davidson

As spring wakes us to the fresh colors and new life of this potent season, I feel pulled. The warming weather is a catalyst for change and I for one hear the call. To shop. For its miles of style, substance and swagger, the temptation takes me to Detroit. At over 139 square miles, our big city neighbor can seem overwhelming, so I decide to take a friendly local guide. Omar Davidson, born and raised in Detroit, partnered with me on this exploration and this piece.

THE WORD FROM OMAR:

I was born and raised in Detroit all the way through high school, but I cannot say I grew up or came of age there. When I left for college and moved out of town, I became more aware. Now, in some ways, I find myself in an interesting position of feeling like the city I once called home is a new and strange place. Perhaps I feel a touch of imposter syndrome, as if I don't deserve the distinction. Yet, I am aware of other feelings. Having visited the city recently, I've noticed, with some sadness, that there are a number of shops, boutiques, eateries, and restaurants I treasured in my youth that are gone. In their place others have arisen. However, to my surprise and pleasure, these newer additions to the cityscape are vibrant and cool. I want to become reacquainted with the city.

EASTERN MARKET

Most of us are aware of the extensive area known as Eastern Market**.** Today we sought to explore more of the smaller gems in this area. The bright window art at People's Records compelled us to enter. According to vinylfactory.com's list of world's best record shops, this unassuming shop has made the list as one of the best record stores in the world for good reason. Bins and bins of albums in every genre crowd this old school haunt that shares a door with the minimalist Trinosophes Café and venue. I feel like a time traveler as I uncover the 45s and LPs that informed my childhood soundtrack. The guys here are super helpful and excited to guide our exploration, like librarians for your eardrums. We decide to do a random DJ dive and each pick our top three albums. Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and Miles Davis for me, along with Stéphan Grappelli, John Coltrain, and Etta James for Omar. One of the vintage compact turntables from the 70s completes the purchase to take back to our ideal little jewel box of an Airbnb in the Kean building on East Jefferson.

Along this strip a few other storefronts entice. Boro is a beautiful boutique showcasing handpicked consignment pieces. From 50s and 60s kitsch, to 70s and 80s funk, and even more modern, their small collection of shoes, boots, jewelry, and classic fashion is perfectly curated for today's looks. Although their full collection is available online, it feels so good to be invited inside to savor the touch and textures in this airy showroom. You can bring items to consign for a deeper participation in the retro fashion scene. I just might try my hand with my old Pendelton collection next visit. Today, I leave with a perfect pair of Blundstone boots and a cashmere sweater ideal for the slight spring chill.

BINS AND BINS OF ALBUMS IN EVERY GENRE CROWD THIS OLD SCHOOL HAUNT THAT SHARES A DOOR WITH THE MINIMALIST TRINOSOPHES CAFE AND VENUE

A few doors down we ring the bell to be invited into the very swanky menswear atelier, Tailored Detroit. As owner and in-house tailor, Warick made us feel very welcome here among the custom components on his work surface. Dinner jackets, suits, and ready to wear items line the wall. They hand craft unique designs for every day to the most special of occasions, serving full wedding parties and custom

FOR ITS MILES OF STYLE, SUBSTANCE AND SWAGGER, THE TEMPTATION TAKES ME TO DETROIT.

SALES CLERK, RACHEL SULTANA, PUTTING ON THE RITZ AT THE BORO.

THERE IS SOMETHING VERY TRANSFORMATIONAL ABOUT STANDING AT THE MIRROR IN A PERFECTLY FITTED SUIT.
TAILORD
TAILORED
DETROIT

Pursuing Detroit's Hidden Gems continued. . . .

requests—like one groom who had a vintage pirate map printed into his lining. A single button jacket fits Omar beautifully and could be custom made in any of these elegant fabrics to pair with matching flat-front trousers. The length and cut can be fine-tuned by appointment. There is something very transformational about standing at the mirror in a perfectly fitted suit. Without an occasion we might not justify the purchase this time, though maybe being dressed to impress would instigate the opportunity! With a single pair of flowered socks in the bag, we will have to find out next time, the power of owning such a bespoke piece.

THE WORD FROM OMAR:

As I've aged, so too have my tastes and interests. Since I enjoy a dapper, custom-made suit, I would recommend Tailored, located in the Eastern Market district. Tailored is a Detroit-based men's wear boutique. I felt immediately immersed into the story and elegance of space. All of the tools a master tailor would need were neatly in their place and handsome suit jackets with matching slacks of various colors hung on industrial style racks and mannequins. I was graced by the store's owner, Warick, who promptly fitted me expertly for a jacket even as he explained the details of his intricate profession.

A walk through more of Eastern Market shops is mesmerizing—so many temptations. Detroit Hustles Harder seems like a necessary stop. Loyalty runs deep in the D and their hoodies, sweats, and tees say it all, with an ever-expanding selection of clever Detroit-centric designs. Detroit Vs. Everybody presents a similar line of tees and sweatshirts to announce local pride, and Bert's Market Place and Entertainment Complex couldn't be missed even if you tried. The vibrant sight spills out onto the sidewalk with music blasting and the BBQ smoke wafting past announced their deeply Detroit vibe to anyone within earshot. Check their calendar to make it for comedy or live music on stage or right there on the sidewalk. This place is a party every time and you are invited. As long as you're cool.

MIDTOWN

Next our exploration takes us to the Cass Corridor for the whole Shinola deep dive. The massive flagship showroom is crisp and glistening with style, from the coffee bar's leather couches to the chrome shine of bicycles hanging from the ceiling, to the richly colored leather watch straps and leather journals laid just so in their saturated palette. The experience has a spa effect that makes me stand a little taller. Next door, Shinola Home, is a bold expression of their aesthetic made large.

Across the road we find the wonderfully warm and quirky City Bird and Nest House Wares. The two affiliated shops, owned by a brother and sister team, are filled with everything you'd ever want for your brass bar cart, your subway tiled kitchen counter, and your pretty bathroom curio. The fanciful and vibrant aesthetic at City Bird will charm you, while next door at Nest I was just as taken with the muted mood of vanilla tobacco scented soaps, cedar and suede candles, comic book-colored cards, half-moon bronze earrings, and every other item so cutting edge you can't keep up.

LOYALTY RUNS DEEP IN THE "D" AND THEIR HOODIES, SWEATS, AND TEES SAY IT ALL, WITH AN EVER-EXPANDING SELECTION OF CLEVER DETROIT-CENTRIC DESIGNS.

The anchor of this strip, the White Stripes' Third Man Records was opened in 2015. This museum of music has a pressing plant in the back, a performance venue, recording studio, and record store, of course, but the display of block lettered long sleeve t-shirts and vintage style sweatshirts is really enough. The very air is rich with rock and roll in this primary-colored location. A full transformation was tempting, but I settled on a pair of red tube socks, with white stripes.

THE MASSIVE FLAGSHIP SHOWROOM OF SHINOLA IS CRISP AND GLISTENING WITH STYLE, FROM THE COFFEE BAR'S LEATHER COUCHES TO THE CHROME SHINE OF BICYCLES HANGING FROM THE CEILING, TO THE RICHLY COLORED LEATHER WATCH STRAPS AND LEATHER JOURNALS LAID JUST SO IN THEIR SATURATED PALETTE

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DETROIT'S HIDDEN GEMS CONTINUED...

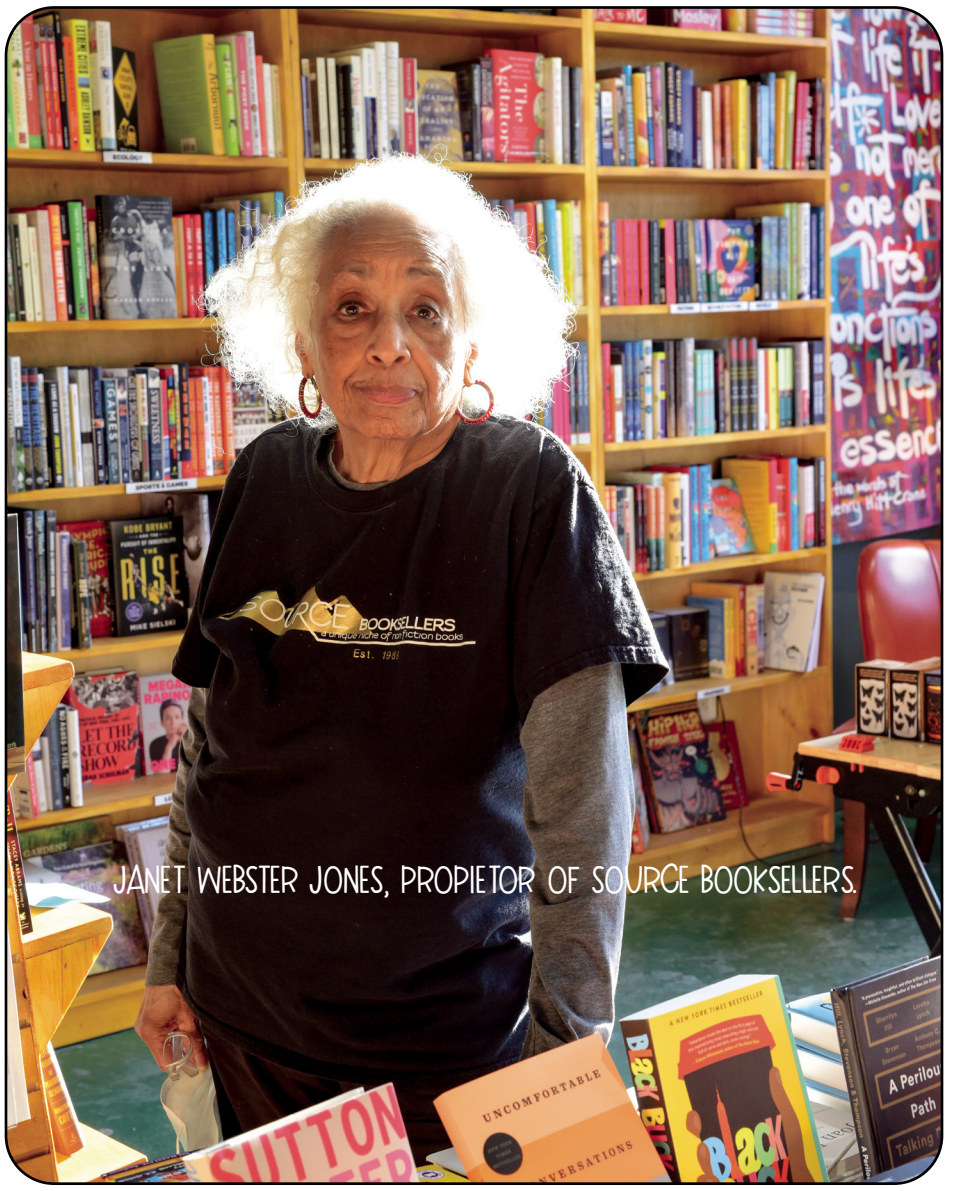
Across Cass Avenue, the Auburn Building was established in 2012, and has been a great host to draw some crucial shops to the scene. We found ourselves following a gaggle of pink haired teens in for boba tea at Tou & Mai where the carnival colors of Japanese treats define this trendy little space.

But Omar brought us here for the more important exploration of Source Books.

THE WORD FROM OMAR:

If you're looking for a good book to dive into, I highly recommend making a stop at Source Booksellers. Located in the Cass Corridor, Source Books is a charming African-American owned bookstore that offers a unique niche of non-fiction authors, a large Afrocentric selection, and a recently added children's section. I was warmly greeted by a woman who turned out to be the proprietor of the establishment, Janet Webster Jones. Nearly every wall is adorned with colorful, beautiful books filled with story and insight.

Next door, the large and beautifully appointed showroom Nora 4240 will impress your sensibilities. Their tag line, "purveyor of beautiful things and ideas," speaks to every item throughout. Their range is wide, spanning housewares, apothecary, jewelry, and accessories, but their vision is singular. Everything in here will soothe your soul with a refined elegance and taste.



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CORKTOWN

Corktown is the area perhaps most known for the resurgence of a new Detroit. With Slow's BBQ and Gold Cash Gold bringing up the area, the retail viability soon followed. You can window shop for most of a mile along Michigan Avenue.

Off the beaten path in an old sports memorabilia shop, Michigan & Trumbull is a pizza place that will appeal to every picky eater in your party. Gluten free and vegan cheese is popular here, but don't let that fool you. Their four-corner deep dish pizza is traditionally Detroit style through and through, with enough innovation to make it amazing. They are keeping busy with a bustling take out business these days, but we will return for a cocktail at their full bar soon.

CORKTOWN IS THE AREA PERHAPS MOST KNOWN FOR THE RESURGENCE OF A NEW DETROIT. WITH SLOW'S BBQ AND GOLD CASH GOLD BRINGING UP THE AREA, THE RETAIL VIABILITY SOON FOLLOWED.

Down the block, a cute collection of shops crowd the corner with Mama Coo's Boutique as the central storefront. Falling for their impressive collection of curios could occupy half a day. Vintage spans from the 20s to the 70s here, with an eccentric style that blends into one charming aesthetic. From rhinestones to the more rugged Navajo throws, the appeal of this crowded place is rooted in nostalgia but is very relevant for today's trends. Who doesn't need another brooch for their jean jacket?

Union 3 Tattoos is open Wednesdays for walk-ins, so we walked in and were wowed by the bright and artful studio. Specializing in traditional old-school artistry, the shop has a surprisingly modern and open feeling.

THE WORD FROM OMAR:

I'm not a tattoo guy myself, still, I can appreciate a well-inked body when I see one. Union 3 Tattoo, located in Detroit's historic Corktown, is the place to go for professional, stunning work. I stepped into the shop and met the owner, Mike Emmet. A fan of Crazy Wisdom, Emmet took the time out of his busy schedule to make me feel welcome. Ornate tattoo templates hang from the walls even as the artists are hard at work inking in their creations on their respective clients.

THE TWO AFFILIATED SHOPS, OWNED BY A BROTHER AND SISTER TEAM, ARE FILLED WITH EVERYTHING YOU'D EVER WANT FOR YOUR BRASS BAR CART, YOUR SUBWAY TILED KITCHEN COUNTER, AND YOUR PRETTY BATHROOM CURIO.

CITY BIRD

DETROIT'S HIDDEN GEMS CONTINUED....

Above the tattoo shop, the building owner, Anthony O'Donnell, is crafting a beautifully vintage venue**.** Yet unnamed, he is open to suggestions. With utmost respect for the building's original features, the update highlights the old polish and frames it with a modern shine. Soon the six-foot-high windows that surround the 4000 square foot great room will let the light shine on a refurbished dance floor. An industrial chic statement staircase will take you to the bright bird's nest level, where a bride can get ready or the VIP party can continue. Glass doors open to an additional 3000 sq foot rooftop garden with a brick oven. And one more staircase takes you to the tip-top roof level for a high city photo shoot. There is no better place to toast to this amazing town during this impressive time of transition.

INSPIRED TO TAKE A DAY OR WEEKEND TRIP INTO DETROIT? HERE'S WHERE YOU CAN FIND ALL THE AMAZING PLACES WE VISITED.

Peoples Records 1464 Gratiot Avenue (313) 831-0864

Trinosophes 1464 Gratiot Avenue (313) 737-6606

Boro Consignment 1140 Gratiot Avenue (313) 888-9648

Tailored Detroit 1410 Gratiot Avenue (313) 656-4607

Source Books 4240 Cass Avenue (313) 832-1155

Nora 4240 Cass Avenue (313) 831-4845

Shinola Flagship and Shinola Home 441 West Canfield Street (313) 285-2390

Nest House Wares 498 West Canfield Street (313) 831-9146

City Bird 460 West Canfield Street (313) 831-9146

Union 3 Tattoo 1442 Michigan Avenue (313) 638-2729

Anthony's Venue is at 1440 Michigan Avenue

Mama Coo's 1701 Trumbell Street (313) 404-2543

Michigan & Trumbull 1441 West Elizabeth Street (313) 63-pizza

ABOVE THE TATTOO SHOP, THE BUILDING OWNER, ANTHONY O'DONNELL, IS CRAFTING A BEAUTIFULLY VINTAGE VENUE.

MIKE EMMET, OWNER OF UNION 3 TATTOO.

Weekend Getaway

Ronora Lodge — A Gem Out West

By Petula Brown

For some Michiganders, I-94's western track is a familiar path. Excursions to breakfast behemoth Kellogg, muffin maestro Jiffy, or a sandy shore on Lake Michigan share the interstate with commuters and commercial traffic. I-94 is also the gateway to Watervliet, a rural section of the Niles-Benton Harbor metro area—a region often associated with beachfront getaways. A drive through downtown Watervliet provides a juxtaposition of convenience and tradition. The area's relaxed vibe is the ideal backdrop for the natural respite offered by the Ronora Lodge and Retreat Center.

A drive through downtown Watervliet provides a juxtaposition of convenience and tradition. The area's relaxed vibe is the ideal backdrop for the natural respite offered by the Ronora Lodge and Retreat Center.

Ronora's deceptively small Dwight Boyer Road entry point suggests a locale with an equine focus as horses casually trek the landscape. Driving deeper into the property, visitors begin to appreciate not only its expansiveness but also its significance. Signage on the Chadwicke Dining Hall reveals that the Center resides within the Redtail Nature Preserve that's protected by the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, thereby preventing overdevelopment. Visiting Ronora during the off season hid trails under a blanket of snow, but also afforded a chance to see views of the 350+ acre property hidden by foliage during the summer season…a property co-owner Deej Leggitt describes as a place where guests can "commune with the inner soul."

Reverence for nature has defined the site for decades. In the 1930's, the location was home to a horse camp : Camp Watervliet for Girls. Founder Dr. Henry Tatter described the setting as a place to "feel Mother Earth, sense Her balance, and find your own." By 1988, 75 acres was purchased by three friends (Deej and Hunter Leggitt with Jim Gehring) and christened Ronora Lodge and Retreat Center. Named after Ms. Leggitt's grandmother, her Shawnee heritage influenced Ms. Leggitt's passion to engage with nature. Combined with an appreciation for acceptance fostered by experiences with the Unitarian Church, Ronora has evolved to foster "intentional communities" by hosting a variety of public and private events. Spiritual, men's, women's, and yoga groups have embraced Ronora to host activities that encourage recovery, reflection, and respite. 2022 public events include collaborations with The Human Awareness Institute (hai.org) to present the weekend workshop, "Connecting in Love."

Whether experiencing Ronora as an event participant or singular guest, the facilities nicely balance personal comfort with community mindfulness.

Whether experiencing Ronora as an event participant or singular guest, the facilities nicely balance personal comfort with community mindfulness. Accommodations include cottage Casa de Luz's loft and private bathroom, Lonnie's Eco Cottage with a stone fireplace and composting toilet, and bunkhouses Cedar Lodge I and II. Amenities include comforters, pillows, hand soap, and paper products. Guests are welcomed to bring their own bed and bath linens or reserve linen sets for an additional fee. Individuals and small groups may use kitchen facilities equipped with cooking and dining utensils to prepare and serve meals while larger groups can arrange catering services via Ronora. Travelers seeking a tech detox will appreciate the lack of phones and electronics within the Center, but wireless internet is available in the dining hall. Varied options for accommodations, amenities, meals, and tech access allows Ronora to be responsive to guest's unique needs.

Whether one's preference is to embrace the land or water, alone or with others, Ronora has something to suit one's interests.

Beyond sleeping and dining facilities, the Center provides a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces to explore, refresh, or socialize. The dining hall and the Grace in the Woods lakeside sanctuary can be used for solitary practices or reserved for larger events. Three miles of groomed trails are available for biking and hiking. Spring-fed Lake Sherwood is accessible to Ronora guests for swimming, wading, fishing, and shore-side relaxation. Whether one's preference is to embrace the land or water, alone or with others, Ronora has something to suit one's interests.

Guests are welcomed to bring crafts, board games, literature and other hobbies, but Ronora and the communities of the Niles-Benton Harbor metro area provide a variety of leisurely options. The Center provides life preservers, float toys, inner tubes and paddle boats so visitors can fully enjoy Lake Sherwood. Ronora offers basketball hoops, a tennis court, volleyball net, bean bag toss, and horseshoe supplies for group activities. The property also maintains a bonfire area and fire pits and provides wood for use in those areas. A distinctive experience available at Ronora is horse play with rescued equines. Guests are able to visit and feed the animals, but Ronora can arrange other interactive non-riding experiences, too.

For visitors eager to venture beyond the Center, Southwestern Michigan offers the beaches of Lake Michigan and shopping in South Haven and St. Joseph within a 20-minute drive. Summer is also the time to enjoy annual events. Beer lovers can visit the Makers Trail Festival in Bridgman while runners can enjoy the 12 Corners Wine 5K Run in Benton Harbor. Wine and music fans are welcomed to explore the region's numerous wineries, which often host live music.

Ronora illustrates an admirable approach toward embracing and respecting one's surroundings.

Ronora illustrates an admirable approach toward embracing and respecting one's surroundings. The Center also demonstrates strength in the face of adversity. Faced with Covid challenges experienced by most resort locations, Ronora dug in. During the pandemic, the Center acquired a broader footprint that allowed guests exclusive access to Lake Sherwood. A fire destroyed the beloved Grandma's House in July2021. Over 30 years, the House hosted retreats organized by spectrum of institutions including Earth Wisdom, Gay Women of China, Jewish Children's Services, Notre Dame, Sistah-Sistah, and Test Positive Awareness. Ronora supporters rallied, and rebuilding is in progress. When finished it will increase the accommodation capacity to nearly 100 guests in the summer of 2022. Through the years, Ronora has forged its own path as exemplified by the sentiment of Deej, Hunter, and Jim when they say, "Ronora owns us."

Ronora is located at 9325 Dwight Boyer Rd, Watervliet, MI 49098. You can learn more online at ronoralodge.com. To contact Ronora email ronoralodge@gmail.com or call (269) 463-6315.

Out of My Comfort Zone

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal asked a number of leaders in southeastern Michigan's conscious living community to reflect upon times in their lives that they've left their comfot zones to venture out in new ways. In the distant past or much more recently, we asked, what did you do, what inspired you, did it change you, inside or outside, big or little? Did you attend a new class, take an adventurous trip, go skydiving, stretch beyond a long entrenched boundary, start a new relationsip or end an old one, take a leap, retire, join the Peace Corps, go on a night trek in the wilderness, or just do something way out of the ordinary?

Henry Buchtel is a practitioner of acupuncture and herbal medicine. Henry, his wife Jasmine, and daughter Rosemary moved to Ann Arbor from Hunan in 2012, and have enjoyed living wedged between Buhr and County Farm parks, close to where Henry grew up. Henry practices acupuncture at Asian Healing Traditions in Ann Arbor and Jasmine is an RN and medical interpreter at Michigan Medicine.

In the Space Between My Comfort Zones

By Henry Buchtel

Does exhaling take you out of your comfort zone? How about taking a step out ahead of you? How about the first pangs of hunger, or the chill of the air, when you step outdoors on a cold day?

Most people wouldn't describe these as such. Exhaling is perfectly comfortable, as it is followed by the intake of fresh air, then another exhale, then another inhale. We know this. Have you ever stepped out into empty space? No. A step forward meets solid ground, even when you couldn't see it. An appetite is met with food; the chill air loses its bite.

We are so used to moving between these small comfort zones that we don't even notice it happening! Experience from the past gives us the confidence to move forward. We expose our tender skin to the cold, knowing that we will be warm and comfortable again. We leave our shelters in the morning, comfortably assured that we will find it again upon our return.

But sometimes, we step out, and, for a moment, there's nothing there.

That stuffy nose turns into a headache and then boom, you are fever dreaming that there will be no end to your suffering. That honk turns into a gasp which turns into a smash-crunch-wrench, and you wait bewildered to find out if you are okay. We step to the mic and don't know what to say, and don't know what to say, and don't know what to say…waiting to know what to say.

We are so used to moving between these small comfort zones that we don't even notice it happening! Experience from the past gives us the confidence to move forward.

Do we return to our comfort zone? Most of the time, yes, and in most of the ways. When it returns quickly, like that first day of energy returning after a cold, there's almost a sense of ecstasy in the return to normal.

Sometimes, however, we choose to leave our comfort zone. We choose to take great leaps out of our comfort zone, leaping without knowing where we'll land. These leaps can be done with a sense of trust and faith. They can be made because they are the best choice.

I moved to China at the age of 22, knowing it was what I wanted to do, and having no idea what it would actually be like. I did so with inexplicable confidence. In some ways, the experiences I had there have still left me out in the cold—they still gnaw at me in their desire to be understood. In other ways, I have fully exhaled and inhaled again, reaching a state of comfort.

The China I moved to in 2001 was, on the whole, a very welcoming environment for a young, white, American male. I took this for granted, as one does, and took full advantage of the opportunities presented to me. In my free time I bicycled and walked everywhere I wished, and, although I was often an object of attention and curiosity, I always felt welcomed and treated with respect. In the cities I would walk down the narrowest alleyways, poking my head into the smallest shops, but also stride confidently into the glitziest new fashion malls, and through the gates of the ritziest gated communities, wearing whatever I wished (blue jean overalls, ratty t-shirt, and "Liberation" canvas shoes). In the countryside I could hike across rice-fields and through villages, and camp in the hills undisturbed. I was invited to appear on TV shows, and in advertisements, and was praised at every turn for my fluency and interest in traditional Chinese culture.

That became my comfort zone—knowing I was welcome everywhere and could charm my way into, and out of, any situation.

I was once rudely shaken out of my comfort zone by a guard at a gated community in Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, where I was studying traditional Chinese medicine.

My wife and I had temporarily moved off campus while preparing for the arrival of our child. This temporary apartment, while only a few city blocks from our previous lodgings on the university campus, was a world away from the environment of students and professors that we were used to. The new neighborhood was made up of older, and somewhat run-down residential buildings, connected by a network of narrow back-alleys. The wider alleys were filled with wooden pushcarts and sellers with their wares spread out on the ground on cloth sheets.

Getting to know our new neighborhood, we decided to take a shortcut through a new gated community that we could see had a well-tended garden and wide-open plaza. I assumed from experience we would be welcomed, and, used to the open college campus, we both liked the idea of walking through a prettier, quieter place where we could relax and get relief from the hot summer sun.

We stepped out—there was solid ground under our feet last time….

I was surprised to encounter a guard at the back gate who demanded to know our address. This was not unheard of, and of course this is what any unfamiliar person would have to do to enter, but I was confident my white face and fluent Mandarin would guarantee our entry.

Sometimes, however, we choose to leave our comfort zone. We choose to take great leaps out of our comfort zone, leaping without knowing where we'll land.

"No, no, we don't live here, we live back there (gesturing down the alley-way), we just want to walk through."

"No entry!"

"No, no, you don't understand, we just heard that there's a swimming pool here," (this was true), "and we are thinking of getting a membership" (this was not).

"No entry!" More forcefully this time, aggressively holding his arm out with some anger in his eyes.

Affronted, "How dare you! I will complain to the management! What is your name!"

"No entry!" As a small crowd gathered around, we grew embarrassed. With me muttering under my breath and my wife shushing me, we turned away and walked back along the alleyway toward our apartment.

I was irrationally upset and fumed for days. Such is the power of an unexamined comfort zone! Such is the entitlement of privilege. I did not follow through on my empty threat of reporting the guard, knowing full well that he was doing exactly what he was supposed to do, and that it was I who had grown accustomed to skirting around the rules.

Getting over my irritation didn't mean I had re-entered my comfort zone. I did not feel I understood what had happened, nor could I accept having been treated so rudely. Some glimmer of understanding, however, did start to emerge in the months that we continued to live in and explore that neighborhood.

The China I moved to in 2001 was, on the whole, a very welcoming environment for a young, white, American male. I took this for granted, as one does, and took full advantage of the opportunities presented to me.

At the end of one of the main alleyways was a popular Halal (*qingzhen*) restaurant, which we frequented with other mostly Han Chinese patrons. The alleyway markets in this neighborhood were also where you would go to buy fresh Hami melons, shipped over the new highways several provinces over from Xinjiang, in the far west of China, and sold by mostly middle-aged Uygher men.

These men stood out in the neighborhood, as much as I did. Brown or green eyes, dark brown hair, tanned freckled skin and high noses, and wearing practical clothing and distinctive hats. The younger men's fashion tended toward sleek tracksuits, as you might see in Eastern Europe.

It was a running joke between myself and my classmates at the university that I could be mistaken for someone "selling mutton kebabs," another common profession for the Uygher merchants. It was funny, of course, because it was both quite possible and completely improbable. An American mistaken for an Uygher? What a joke!

Somehow it doesn't seem as funny now as it did then.

I imagine the guard was as surprised as I was to find a young Uygher man with a pregnant Han Chinese wife, speaking fluent Chinese and expecting (and then demanding) to be let through the back gate.

Uyghers would not be given the leeway granted to the white American foreigner. It is difficult to characterize how they are treated in China, but I was struck by how unwelcome I felt. In a moment I was shown what it was to be treated as if I were not part of the affirmative action for whites' program, caught unawares with my expectations held up high.

Affirmative action for whites, indeed!

Fifteen years later, we are in Ann Arbor (thoroughly within my comfort zone!), and our daughter is a teen.

On Monday mornings I join a group of neighbors for a mindfulness meditation session led by Lynn Sipher, a local therapist and meditation leader. In recent months the readings have been from Ruth King's "Mindful of Race." King, a Black American, explores the experience of racism using the language of mindfulness practice.

After discussing each reading, we take time to re-center with mindfulness practice. Open awareness allows the inner narrative to settle, or at least be seen. These readings, in the context of a mindfulness practice, have allowed me to reflect on my discomfort in being mistaken for another race.

Racism in the contemporary US is often discussed in terms of microaggressions, and I would just say that the distance between that and a "microwelcome" is quite palpable. And we know that small persistent changes over time can accrete and divert the flow of choices available to each individual.

But where can we start? King suggests we choose to intervene on the level of awareness. Mindfulness practice would have us start with noticing. Notice when and how you label people, and the way those labels influence your behavior. If you see yourself performing microaggressions, notice them. If you see yourself performing microwelcomes, notice. This mindfulness, although practiced from a state of comfort, leads to changes in how we respond when we are out of our comfort zone, too.

I was irrationally upset and fumed for days. Such is the power of an unexamined comfort zone!

If fate had not taken me out of my racial comfort zone in this way, I might have trouble seeing things from the other side. These personal observations have been bolstered by reading research on the impact of changing the gender or race on a job application resume. From both perspectives, I can see that some of what I take to be a reflection of my individual qualities is instead affirmed upon those who share my racial identity. For me now to believe that there is a kind of "affirmative action" that has lifted me in this world does not take much of a stretch of the imagination.

We exhale, we inhale. We step out, meet the ground, and step out again. Experiences from between comfort zones have value. Their value, however, is often realized from the quiet vantage point of the shore.

To learn more about Henry please visit asianhealingtraditions.com.

Out of My Comfort zonE

continued...

Christina Wall is an end of life doula and is trained in First Steps Advanced Care Planning. She specializes in working with adult children who are in caregiving roles as well as caregivers to patients with dementia. She lives in Ann Arbor with her husband, Alex, daughter Emmeline, and twin sons Oliver and Evan. Christina teaches part time at Eastern Michigan University, enjoys playing the piano, cooking, and cuddling with the family dog, Finn.

The Paradox of Dying

By Christina Wall

I will never forget the moment when I walked into the hospice home for the first time to see my dad. A palliative care doctor recommended hospice care the day before and he was transferred to this hospice home from a rehabilitation facility. I had been his primary caretaker throughout his rapid decline—navigating the hospital scene, confronting doctors, and aggressively advocating for his care. This situation was without a doubt my comfort zone—having concrete things to fix and fixing them. I was confident in my abilities, and due to an extensive history of trauma, seemingly thrived in the chaos and intensity of the situation.

I had been his primary caretaker throughout his rapid decline—navigating the hospital scene, confronting doctors, and aggressively advocating for his care. This situation was without a doubt my comfort zone—having concrete things to fix and fixing them.

Then the fixable things became unfixable. My final "fix" was asking the palliative care doctor to complete the hospice evaluation and assist in getting my dad transferred to a new facility. Just like that, I was thrust out of my comfort zone and into a world of quiet observation. The thing I would be quietly observing and holding space for was the impending death of my father.

I sat in the parking lot for a long time before going in to see my dad that day. I believed I was about to embark on something seemingly impossible, yet inevitable. Vulnerability, finitude, and quiet all resided inside that building and, in my everyday life. These things had become my nemeses. I envisioned what would happen to me the minute I saw him in his bed. My prediction was that I would shake (and potentially vomit) from anxiety and then promptly melt into a puddle onto the floor. I would be reeling from the recent revocation of my fixer role while simultaneously becoming the one that needed to be fixed—all resulting in being unable to be present for my father during this precious time. I sat in the parking lot, envisioning my worst nightmare.

I always find it amusing when people react with "that is so generous" when I tell them that I'm a hospice volunteer. Truth be told, it is quite a selfish act for me—or at minimum, a win-win for the patient *and* me.

I eventually opened the door to the building. It was quiet and vulnerable and there was a definite sense of finitude, just as I predicted. Yet, I have never been caught so off guard in my life. My soul was at peace before I even got to my dad's room. I stood at his entrance.

"Hey, Dad."

"Hey, Baby."

I was still his 44-year-old baby. But there I was—not shaking, or vomiting, or melting into a puddle. I was fully present in a way that I had never experienced. Everything that was important rose to the forefront because there is no time for anything else in the face of death. And the reality of it is that we are all facing death every day. Modern society has stripped us of many of the reminders of this—for example, products that develop insatiable cravings for youth and normalized quests to seek out all life-saving treatments regardless of quality of life in the process. This is to our great detriment because as I spent time with my dad in that hospice home, I began to learn that the awesomeness of life gains clarity while learning to be present in death.

I wanted to learn more, so I became I hospice volunteer. I always find it amusing when people react with "that is so generous" when I tell them that I'm a hospice volunteer. Truth be told, it is quite a selfish act for me—or at minimum, a win-win for the patient *and* me. I give them my full presence and in return…well, I end up getting something similar. Magical, really.

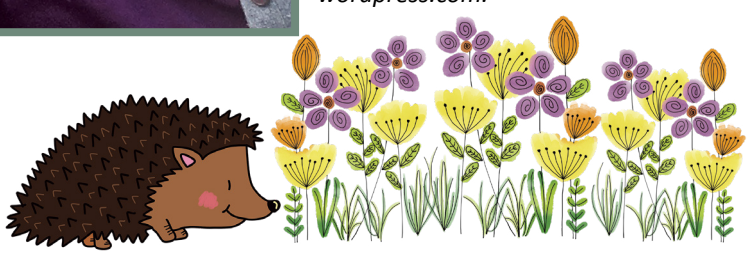
Within about a week of this day with my dad, just as I was resting on the coattails of awe and peace, my mom was officially diagnosed with dementia. I quickly began to see that my newly found "death is awe-inspiring and something to be embraced" approach was potentially a little naïve or at minimum, not inclusive of all end-of-life experiences. Dementia is not beautiful. I was not awe-inspired as I witnessed the cognitive decline of my mother. It was a sad, exhausting experience filled with devasting loss over and over, and in so many ways. My dad died in March and by April, I had gained guardianship and conservatorship through the court system and placed my mom in a memory care facility. She developed bladder cancer in addition to her dementia and died a couple months after being placed on hospice. Covid took her out in the end. That three-year time from my dad's death until her passing was potentially the most challenging of my life.

There is something comforting about using the knowledge gained through heartache and joys to help others.

These experiences, both personally and as a hospice volunteer, drew me to this work as an end-of-life doula. I took the training with Merilynne Rush in early 2020 and then promptly put everything on the back burner while I cared for my mother in her last, intense year. The opportunity to work with my first client in the doula role came just 12 days after my mom's death. I had to answer the question for myself, "Is this too soon?" It wasn't. The timing was perfect. There is something comforting about using the knowledge gained through heartache and joys to help others. And every time I have been able to provide some gentle guidance and relief since that first client, I also heal a little.

Dying can be challenging, exhausting, sad, beautiful and awe-inspiring. The bulk of my work as a doula includes helping caregivers untangle, the often overwhelming, logistical mess of end-of-life care. But the deep work includes helping caregivers and their dying loved ones to accept and embrace this profound paradox of the dying process… to help them feel not so alone as they don their armor and become courageous, grounded end of life warriors.

Learn more about Christina at cwalleoldoula.wordpress.com.



Hand Crafting

Easy to Wash Summer Bags

By Jennifer Carson

Easy to wash bags are so simple to make and great for a multitude of summer tasks. Pack a sandy bathing suit in it for the ride home from the lake and toss it right in the washer. Gather produce from the garden or the market. Need to take a few craft items to keep busy on a road trip? This bag is the perfect size!

I used a fat quarter from Spoonflower.com. If you don't know what Spoonflower is, check it out! There are thousands of designs by independent designers, and the fabric is printed just for you. There are a bunch of base fabric choices, but I chose to use the Sweet Pea Gauze for my "Finch in Love" design because it is lightweight and easy to sew. Let's do it!

Besides your basic sewing supplies you'll need: a fat quarter of your favorite fabric (the sweet pea gauze is 28" x 18"—a little bigger than your typical fat quarter), and a yard of twill tape or other ribbon-like material for the tie.

1. Start by serging or zig-zagging all the edges of your material.

2. On one long side of your rectangle, fold your fabric in ¼" and press with a warm iron. Then, to make the tie casing, fold over again about 1". Stitch close to the fold.

3. Fold your rectangle in half lengthwise and pin edges.

4. Sew your edges, but don't sew over the casing. Backstitch at casing to finish. Turn right side out. Attach a safety pin to your tie material and thread through the casing.

Knot the ends of the tie material together and voila! You have the perfect summer bag!

Jennifer Carson is a local author and artist who enjoys creating beautiful items for home and family. You can see more of her work and peruse all of her crafting patterns at thedragoncharmer.com.

Healers of Ann Arbor

When is a Massage Not a Massage?

By Laura K. Cowan

Lisa Teets is a local Bowenwork healer, Tai Chi instructor, and fan of wellness modalities in general. I met her in a local Tai Chi class several years ago, and we hit it off. As many of us struggle with stress into year three of the pandemic, I wanted to learn more about her primary modality—Bowenwork—to ask what makes it different from a massage and how people might know if they would benefit from trying it.

Laura Cowan: Hi, Lisa! Tell us about Bowenwork. What sets it apart from "normal" massage?

Lisa Teets: Bowenwork is capitalized and trademarked, and it cannot be referred to as massage, actually. [It's considered] "other bodywork."

Bowenwork is a gentle manual therapy that works on the autonomic nervous system [in order] to reset the body to heal itself.

Laura Cowan: So, how does it work?

Lisa Teets: Bowenwork is a gentle manual therapy that works on the autonomic nervous system [in order] to reset the body to heal itself. Muscles, joints, and tendons play a large role in keeping our body in balance. Oftentimes when we receive an injury, our body's response is to lock down that area, creating a muscle cast or protection for that injury. The targeted and gentle touch [of Bowenwork] will stimulate proprioceptors, which send signals to the brain about how we hold ourselves in space. The brain sends messages back down into the body to initiate unwinding and resetting of tissue tension.

Laura Cowan: Fascinating. So, you're connecting with the nervous system to help the body unwind and heal itself.

Lisa Teets: Bowenwork is a holistic healing modality. The body's innate healing intelligence is mobilized to take the liberated energy and use it where the body most requires it. Bowen work utilizes very gentle and precise moves that are performed on the belly of the muscle. These moves stimulate proprioceptors in the muscles and tendons. There is wait time between the moves to allow time for the brain to send messages down the body through the fascia to initiate unwinding and changes in the tissue tension.

LC: How did you get into this area of healing?

LT: I had been receiving massage and chiropractic for many years to keep my neck and back pain from worsening. When I started receiving Bowenwork, my issues were becoming resolved, more than just my back and neck. After several weeks of sessions, the changes were so profound that I looked into training. I wanted to offer this modality to others. Many clients come to me regularly, and some only need a few sessions. But always, they refer others to me.

LC: What else makes this modality stand out to you, or why do you love working with it?

LT: I have always been a teacher. I would teach my sister as a child. I tutored mathematics in high school and college, and I enjoyed a career as a high school mathematics teacher. After beginning aerobics, I pursued training in teaching aerobics. I did the same with yoga, Pilates, and Tai Chi. I have loved helping clients with Bowenwork, and I love teaching Bowenwork to others.

LC: How can people get in touch if they want to learn more?

LT: Besides [offering phone consultations] to help my clients, I also teach a four-hour introductory course for self-help titled "Bowenwork, an Introduction to Wellness in Your Hands." These classes will be offered several times throughout the year. It is a powerful healing modality, and I love offering this power to others.

When we injure ourselves, the body keeps that area safe and protected for a time. Sometimes that protective tension is not released, and we carry it for many years.

LC: Tell us about what it would be like to experience BowenFix in a session. What happens first? What does it feel like to work with this type of healing modality?

LT: First, I have a telephone consultation with people that are unfamiliar with Bowenwork to let them know how a session will proceed. When they arrive, we sit and again speak of their issues and how the session will go. Some choose to remain fully clothed, some wear less clothing, and they are fully covered with blankets or a sheet. I will do a few moves, usually beginning with the lower back.

LC: How does it progress in a session? Does it take time?

LT: There is wait time between each set of moves to allow the body to respond to the messages that I set in. This time allows for holistic changes in the muscle tension. Clients are always amazed at the deep sense of relaxation that ensues during a session. I have many clients that see me once or twice, and their issues are resolved enough that they need not schedule more appointments right away. I have other clients that choose to see me a few times each month to maintain comfort.

LC: So, this really isn't appropriate to call a massage at all. How else does this treatment differ from massage?

LT: There are no lotions or oils used on the skin. The client can be seated, standing, or laying down. There's no deep tissue work. This work is very gentle. It is more fixative than massage. My experience indicates that it works as well as physical therapy and chiropractic.

Bowenwork is safe and appropriate for all, from babies to the elderly, from athletes to people with chronic conditions.

LC: Tell me more about the movements used on the muscles.

LT: Bowenwork primarily consists of soft rolling movements over soft tissue and includes wait time for the body to respond. The moves are never painful or intense. Most people find the procedure to be extremely relaxing.

LC: How would someone know if this is the right modality for them? Does it help with certain conditions particularly well? Are there any contraindications to consider before trying?

LT: Bowenwork is safe and appropriate for all, from babies to the elderly, from athletes to people with chronic conditions. It is also used on animals and racehorses. There are very few procedures that are contraindicated for any person or any condition. When we injure ourselves, the body keeps that area safe and protected for a time. Sometimes that protective tension is not released, and we carry it for many years. The tension then affects other parts of the body. Bowenwork messages go to the original injury and unwind the trauma from that site and along the entire fascia line. Since there is wait time between each set of moves, I can see more than one client at a time. I have worked on several people at once at conferences and healing fairs. The healing in your hands class that I offer addresses low back pain, shock, breathing capacity, breathing difficulties, asthma, heartburn, acid reflux, hiatal hernias, gastrointestinal complications, knee problems, neck pain or restriction, and tension headaches.

Conditions that can be addressed also include frozen shoulder, restless leg syndrome, post-traumatic stress, whiplash, backache, carpal tunnel, TMJ, joint pains, scoliosis, fibromyalgia, knee problems, and headaches.

To learn more about Lisa Teets and her services, visit bowenfix.com. To schedule an appointment call (734) 678-4791 or email lisamteets@gmail.com.

Namaste, Katie...

Whether you're a seasoned yogi or getting ready to roll out your mat for the first time, here you'll find a variety of useful tips from local yoga instructor, Katie Hoener.

Namaste Katie,

I have, lovingly, been practicing a lot of restorative yoga over the last few years. I am now engaging in some more active practices. As I make this transition is there a particular posture that you recommend to activate the muscles and keep me focused?

Liza, Ann Arbor

Hi Liza,

I love this question. I too, have spent a lot of time lately in restorative practices, the desire to slow down during external chaos is important to tap into. It is also important to listen to your body and spirit in terms of adding asana with more activity, more agni: fire. A favorite of mine is Trikonasana, Triangle pose. Trikonasana is a pose that engages a great number of muscles in the body and can be modified to your heart's content to meet our own unique needs.

From a Virabhadrasana II, Warrior II pose, bring the feet slightly closer together. We will straighten the front leg while keeping the front knee soft. Inhale the arms to about shoulder height, exhale and kick the back hip back while reaching the front hand forward and allowing it to reach to the area that feels right. For some of us that front arm will rest on the thigh, others the inside of the shin, others on the floor. Some of us may wish to use a block under the hand to support the pose. The top arm may reach toward the sky, as pictured, or it may rest at the hip. For the gaze, we have the option for a neutral neck, or to take the gaze toward the sky or the floor. As we make adjustments with the arms and neck, we want to check with the heart center and assure that it is not tipping toward the floor.

Trikonasana activates muscles through the feet and legs, the glutes, the core and back, and all through the arms. This pose can also take time getting comfortable in, so as you took the time in restorative classes, take time with Trikonasana, see where it opens up for you, and see where it challenges you. These are great areas of focus, as long as there is no pain.

Namaste Katie,

I have found myself overwhelmed with grief of an oftentimes global scale. My partner is struggling to understand why these events get to me, and I have stopped explaining it, and have turned to meditation and similar practices to try to understand my feelings. Do you have any recommendations for particular practices?

Dale, Ann Arbor

Hello Dale,

Being sensitive to global loss and shared humanity is a large component of compassion. Allowing it to impact us shows a connection to others and recognition of the threads that bind the human spirit. When it starts to impact your daily life, it certainly is worth talking to someone or taking a look at any other factors. Yoga, and other contemplative practices, address common humanity in every practice, as the idea that we all share a universal consciousness is core to the practice. A wonderful meditation that may support the journey that you are on is the practice of Lovingkindness.

In The Mind Self-Compassion Workbook by Dr. Kristin Neff and Dr. Christopher Germer, among the various methods explained, they discuss the benefits of practicing lovingkindness for ourselves and. Drs. Neff and Germer did not invent Lovingkindness practices. In fact, these meditations and practices have been in use for thousands of years; however, they have been studying the impact of many practices in relationship to self-compassion on individuals and communities.

The most common Lovingkindness practice is to repeat four mantras, and this repetition can be external or internal, and at times a combination of both. We start with," May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be healthy. May I live with ease." Repeat several times slowly, softly. If we are sending the lovingkindness to a specific person, we gently replace the 'I' with 'you' or the individual's name. For the global perspective you were describing, we broaden the lovingkindness even further: "May we be healthy. May we be peaceful. May we be healthy. May we live with ease." This is a beautiful daily practice to help soften grief and create, or enhance, feelings of connection. May you feel peace.

Namaste Katie,

I have been following along with all of the breath advice of late, and am enjoying those practices, as I can do many of them while on most remote meetings. The last one shared (Mountain Breath) was a little more challenging to practice virtually while working! Do you have any that help with attention while present for work?

Keisha, Superior Township

Dear Keisha,

This is an amazing question! And yes, Mountain Breath would be an interesting look at a work meeting whether you were remote or in person. One consistent breath that is appropriate for most locations is three-part breathing. As with all pranayama, this breath is your own to play with, and to decide how much you want to add on.

We start by making room for the breath. This is usually finding a spot, or space, where you can find a length in the spine. Most desk chairs are not great at this, as they tilt the pelvis in a way that rounds the back. I often find that for a more neutral spine I scoot to the end of my desk chair, and let my hips find a more natural spot. This will of course be different for each of us. Some find a small pillow on the seat of the chair helpful for this as well. Once we feel good about the space we have allowed for the breath, start noticing where the base of the breath is at this time. Oftentimes, we start noticing the breath is high in the chest, perhaps right below the collar bones. Without judgment we notice, and we begin to pull the breath down into the body. Engage the diaphragm and draw the breath further down in the direction of the belly button. Notice the rise and fall of the abdomen. Imagine as though air was pouring into the lungs from a beautiful pitcher. Filling the base of the lungs, the middle, and all the way to the top. We exhale in the opposite order, emptying the top, middle, base of the lungs, engaging the diaphragm at the end of the exhale to clear the last of the breath before beginning again. See how much of the journey you can follow.

As stated above, we have lots of options with this three-part breath. We can extend the breath further and deeper, or keep our breath at its resting space, and notice the action of the breath. If we are at a space in our day where we may be able to close our eyes, we can dive deeper into the internal space of the practice. If we are lengthening the breath, we can engage in that length for a few breaths and relax, then deepen again for a few breaths. We have so many opportunities to explore. This is both a wonderful mindfulness practice and a pranayama practice to engage with the breath.

Katie Hoener is a RYT 500, receiving her 200 and 500 hour trainings. She is also a Licensed Master Social Worker and a partner at Verapose Yoga in Dexter (veraposeyoga.com). Please send your own yoga questions to katie@veraposeyoga.com.

GREAT TASTES IN LOCAL FOOD

By Crysta Coburn • Photography by Mary Bortmas

BON APPÉTIT CUISINE

Ypsilanti is home to a new restaurant that specializes in delicious, authentic West African cuisines. The menu includes universally popular items like jerk chicken, fried plantains, and Jollof rice, but you will find several new things to try, too.

Bon Appétit Cuisine opened last summer at the former location of the closed Golden Wall Chinese restaurant. The tables are dressed in checked picnic tablecloths. The food tastes fresh and homemade. The owners are neighborly. It's the perfect place to step into for a good meal.

When I ordered my dinner, I chose a mix of the known and unfamiliar. The beef "ish" kabobs were tender, savory cuts of beef grilled on wood skewers. Rather than pair these with rice or vermicelli, I chose attieke as my side, a "steamed granulated cassava." Attieke looks like small pellet couscous and has a similar texture. I topped it with a small tub of what seemed to be pickled onions and cucumbers in oil, and it was *so delicious.* It reminded me of a couscous salad that I used to make.

My husband chose jerk chicken, made with Bon Appétit's own blend of herbs and spices, and fried plantains. Because he enjoys these two dishes so much, he can sometimes be picky. Bon Appétit more than passed muster. I couldn't say no to a taste, and I would order both for myself in the future.

Bon Appétit's beverage menu includes freshly squeezed, unpasteurized juices such as ginger juice and bissap. Since I had never heard of bissap, I decided that I needed to try it. Bissap, also known as roselle juice, is made from roselle flowers, a species of hibiscus. It is in fact described as "hibiscus punch" on the menu. To me, the flavor was sweet and reminiscent of coconut. I was a fan; my husband was not.

He did, however, quite enjoy his can of Vimto, a soft drink that is originally from the United Kingdom but is also sold in parts of the Middle East and Western Africa. I also liked it. The flavor reminded me of Michigan's own Faygo Red Pop. (So, vaguely strawberry.) Neither one of us had heard of Vimto before either, so obviously it had to be ordered.

With such tasty, international offerings, I believe that Bon Appétit will not only become an integral part of the Ypsilanti foodscape, but a reason to visit the city in the first place.

With such tasty, international offerings, I believe that Bon Appétit will not only become an integral part of the Ypsilanti foodscape, but a reason to visit the city in the first place.

Bon Appétit Cuisine is located at 421 West Cross Street in Ypsilanti. They are open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed Mondays. For more information call (734) 221-5525. Or visit bonappetitcuisine.com.

OF RICE AND MEN

There is something inherently exciting about descending a flight of stairs to a semi-hidden eatery. I walked past Of Rice and Men twice before my husband pointed out the door nestled between Conor O'Neill's on the left and Blue Llama Jazz Club on the right. (The door isn't hidden. It is, in fact, well marked. I just hadn't realized the restaurant was below ground.)

The dining room is sophisticated yet cozy with a modern Asian vibe. Simple screens create more intimacy between tables. Behind the bar is a mural of what appears to be a horned Japanese oni (a kind of evil spirit from folklore) emerging from churning waves, in pursuit of a person in a rowboat.

The menu is pan-Asian with a modern take. For Example, sushi rolls and nigiri sit beside dumplings and dim sum on the menu. You will also find fried rice and noodle dishes. I particularly enjoyed the Kimchi Fried Rice, which I ordered with tofu rather than Spam because I can't eat pork. It is for sure spicy (it cleared my sinuses), but the strong flavors come together beautifully, and the heat of the gochujang is slightly tempered by the presence of the poached egg and fried tofu.

I relished the flavors of the Yasai Vegetarian Roll with pickled radish, sweet shitake, cucumber, and tamago. And the Veggie Spring Rolls, stuffed with shitake mushrooms, cabbage, glass noodles, carrots, and tofu with sweet chili sauce, were savory and had the perfect crunch.

Other items on the menu include Seared Prawn Tom Kha soup (Thai), Seared Foie Gras Nigiri (Japanese), Prime Beef Tenderloin Satay (Javanese), and Charsiu Bao Buns (Chinese). Some of their signature dishes listed on the menu are Wok Fried Whole

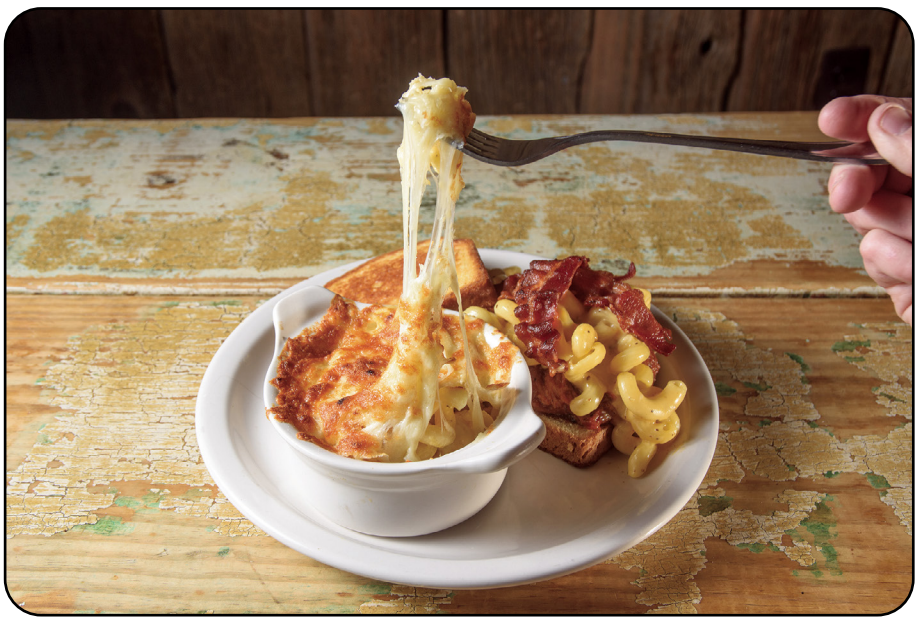
If you are in the mood for a fun night out with innovative takes on traditional dishes, Of Rice and Men should be at the top of your list.

Sea Bass, Korean Short Ribs, and Peking Duck. So you can really see the spectrum of dishes from across Asia and how they've been elevated. And there are a number of vegetarian and pescatarian dishes for more diverse palates.

There is a decent list of tiki style cocktails, wine, beer, and sake to go with your meal as well as tea and coffee for non-drinkers. I was pleased to see the classic Singapore Sling cocktail listed on the menu. (Of Rice and Men's Singapore Sling is made from gin, lime, house grenadine, and pineapple foam.)

If you are in the mood for a fun night out with innovative takes on traditional dishes, Of Rice and Men should be at the top of your list.

Of Rice and Men is located at 312 South Main Street in Ann Arbor. They are open Tuesday through Saturday from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. Closed Sunday and Monday. For more information call (734) 222-0202. Or visit ofriceandmen.com.



SMOKEHOUSE 52 BBQ

As soon as I stepped through the door of Smokehouse 52 BBQ in historic downtown Chelsea, I knew I was in for a treat. The air is filled with the mouthwatering aroma of smoked meats. The walls are rendered rustic with brick and wood, and I suspect the ceiling is the original vintage tin.

While my husband and I did order a full dinner, I personally was truly there for one thing: brisket. Many people I know picture pork when they think of barbecue. But I can't eat pork, and barbecued chicken often leaves much to be desired, so I rely on tender, smoky, delicious beef brisket. With or without barbecue sauce, I don't care.

But Smokehouse 52 BBQ does offer five choices of house-made sauces: All-American, Root Beer, Kiss & Vinegar, and mustard-based Smokehouse Gold. If you want a kick, there is the 52 Alarm sauce, for which they smoke their own jalapenos. And, of course, you can add as much of the signature 52 Rub as you want.

Being largely based around meat and vegetables, the menu is probably the most gluten-free friendly I have seen in a very long time. All of the sides are gluten free minus the mac and cheese and, sadly, cornbread. The cornbread is, of course, Jiffy brand, so I can't really fault them too much for not being gluten free. How could they not represent their home town? (The Chelsea Milling Company that makes Jiffy mix is located only a ten minute walk from Smokehouse 52 BBQ.)

After trying the Smoked Chicken Corn Chowder, which was so rich and creamy that I savored every spoonful, I gleefully dug into my plate of brisket, sweet potato fries, and coleslaw. In my opinion, it was everything barbecue should be. The brisket was tender and packed with flavor. The sweet potato fries were crispy. And the coleslaw

Being largely based around meat and vegetables, the menu at Smokehouse 52 BBQ is probably the most gluten-free friendly I have seen in a very long time.

was crunchy and sweet, but not sugary—and not too peppery either. I washed all this down with a draft root beer, which was quite sweet, but it also had a pronounced root beer flavor.

My husband couldn't resist ordering the Pig Mac, their "saucy slow smoked pulled pork or brisket smothered with [their] Signature Mac & Cheese, topped with bacon and served on Texas toast." He chose the true Pig Mac with pulled pork and also had a draft root beer to drink.

Speaking of. You're probably wondering how that root beer barbecue sauce is. It was actually pretty good! My husband and I both liked it, though I mostly stuck to the All-American. At first it just tastes like a sweet barbecue sauce, but then comes a wave of flavor that is distinctly root beer. What is life without adventure?

If you have a hankering for some good barbecue or just want to try something new, stop by Smokehouse 52 BBQ. It's a real delight.

Smokehouse 52 BBQ has two locations, 125 South Main Street in Chelsea and 105 West Michigan Avenue in Saline. They are open Sunday through Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. For more information call (734) 562 - 2565 (Chelsea) or (734) 316 - 7913 (Saline). Or visit sh52bbq.com.

Scratch That!

Tips for Cooking Real Meals At Home

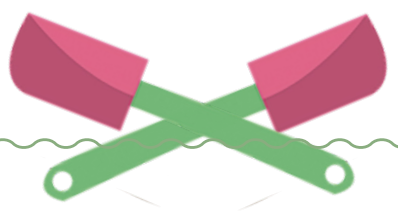
By Liza Baker

Want some good news about the pandemic? Apparently, it's finally gotten us to cook from scratch and eat at home more often.

No mean feat since in 2013 the data points I used in my meal planning classes looked like this:

- In 1900, 2% of meals were eaten outside the home. In 2010, 50% were eaten away from home.
- Most family meals happen about 3x a week, last less than 20 minutes, and are spent watching television or texting.
- Often, each family member eats a different microwaved "food," or as nutrition professor Marion Nestle says, a UFO, an unidentifiable food-like object.
- In 2010, more meals were eaten in the minivan than the kitchen, and 1 in 5 breakfasts came from McDonald's.
- What are the benefits of eating family meals—for kids and adults? According to Dr. Mark Hyman, MD and The Family Dinner Project, they are numerous:
- Better academic/job performance
- Higher self-esteem
- Greater sense of resilience
- Lower risk of substance abuse: Kids who eat family meals regularly are 42% less likely to drink, 50% less likely to smoke, and 66% less like to smoke marijuana.
- Lower risk of teen pregnancy
- Lower risk of depression
- Lower likelihood of developing eating disorders
- Lower rates of obesity

In summary, children who have regular meals with their parents do better in every way, from better health to better grades, to healthier relationships, to staying out of trouble.



Food prepared away from home–including processed/prepared ingredients that you cook with–is higher in saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol, and lower in dietary fiber than food prepared from scratch.

Why cook from scratch?

According to Sophie Egan in *Devoured*, March 2015 was a watershed moment in the eating lives of Americans: for the first time since the government began tracking our spending habits around food (1970), we spent more money on food prepared outside the home (restaurants, takeout, etc.) than on groceries that we cooked at home.

Let's take a look at some of the dangers in our reliance on processed foods, whether we're talking about fast food or highly processed dressings, marinades, mixes, soups, *and others:*

Food prepared away from home—including processed/prepared ingredients that you cook with—is higher in saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol, and lower in dietary fiber than food prepared from scratch.

Americans increased their away-from-home share of calories from 18% to 32% in the last three decades.

Calorie intake rose over the last three decades from 1,875 calories per person per day to 2,002 calories per day. That's 127 calories extra per day, about 1 snack pack, or about 1 lb per month if we consider 1 lb is equivalent to about 3,500 calories.

Now let's take a look at some stats from the CDC:

- From 1999–2000 through 2017–2018, US obesity prevalence increased from 30.5% to 42.4%. During the same time, the prevalence of severe obesity increased from 4.7% to 9.2%.
- Obesity-related conditions include heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, some of the leading causes of preventable premature death.
- Did you know that 85% of our non-communicable diseases are lifestyle-related? That means that we can improve 85% of what ails us through diet and lifestyle.
- The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the United States was $147 billion in 2008. Medical costs for people who had obesity was $1,429 higher than medical costs for people with healthy weight.
- For any HR people out there, the annual costs of obesity-related absenteeism range between $79 and $132 per obese individual, so if you have 1,000 obese employees, your productivity costs could be between $8,000–$132,000 per year. And that doesn't include "presenteeism"—lost productivity even though they are at work! Makes you rethink that vending machine…or at least what's in it.
- I think you can't really dispute that the rise in obesity and related health issues

is traceable to our eating habits. Can we agree that cooking from scratch and eating family meals are two very important health goals?

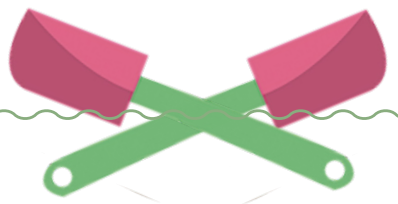
"But it's so harddd."

When I ask people why they don't cook from scratch more often, that's the response I normally get. If we can move beyond that answer, the top reason most people list is time. As in lack of.

Developing a home cooking practice requires us to rethink our relationship with the kitchen, with cooking classes, with social media (@Pinterest, @Instagram), and with food.

As a country, we do love those cooking shows. We'll spend an hour—or go down a rabbit hole and binge for hours—on our favorite while on average, spending less than 30 minutes on making dinner.

Ask any cooking-show-streaming Americans who their kitchen idol is, and they'll immediately toss out a name—from Julia Child to Guy Fieri, Anthony Bourdain to Mary Berry.

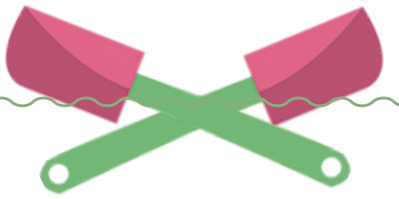


If you do make dinner as planned, there's a pretty good chance that it won't turn out looking like the photograph that caught your eye: there are way too many people posting recipes who are better photographers than recipe writers.

Let's take a look at what these idols dish up "right in front of our eyes"—with hours of pre-prep and a large number of staff. Or did you think reality television means it's real?

Oh, you don't get your inspiration from cooking shows—you go to Pinterest and Instagram?

Why is that a mistake? Because that tells me that when you need to make dinner, you're going to browse all those beautiful photos (and probably go down another rabbit hole for hours), find a recipe, go to the grocery store (more time and money than you planned on more things you don't need), come home, unload the groceries …and then realize you either forgot something or you're just too tired to start now. Besides, takeout is so easy. I kid you not: I tend to get takeout the days I restock my fridge. I know.



The biggest advantage of having a repertoire of simple recipes is that your grocery shopping becomes simpler, and you can stock up on dry goods that you will need every week.

If you do make dinner as planned, there's a pretty good chance that it won't turn out looking like the photograph that caught your eye: there are way too many people posting recipes who are better photographers than recipe writers.

I took an entire class on writing recipes and menus in culinary school, and unless you're savvy enough to catch the mistakes and make the adjustments on the fly, you'll be very sad that you "failed"—and really unwilling to try again.

Top tips for cooking from scratch at home

Cooking from scratch really does get easier: think of it as a practice, like a yoga practice, a mindfulness practice, a gratitude practice, like practicing the piano, like practicing for a presentation at work.

If you have kids who are picky eaters, finding a (healthy) meal they love is a gift, not a curse. Repeat it. Often.

Where can you find simple, repeatable recipes? My favorite place (other than in my own cookbook, *Flip Your Kitchen*) is in the older cookbooks—the ones that were given to women when they were getting ready to set up their own household: *Joy of Cooking, Fannie Farmer, Betty Crocker….* Focus on the older editions, though—avoid anything from the 1960s on, when processed foods suddenly became "ingredients." The added advantage of these cookbooks is that their instructions are very basic, and they don't assume you have all the latest appliances.

The biggest advantage of having a repertoire of simple recipes is that your grocery shopping becomes simpler, and you can stock up on dry goods that you will need every week. Once you have them in your pantry, you won't have to run to the store each time you want to cook.

If you find a recipe that can be made ahead in whole or in part and frozen, that's a double bonus: save yourself more time by making a double or triple batch—it won't add much time, and it'll save on dishes.

Be gentle with yourself: you don't need to develop this practice or even your list of recipes overnight—just keep them handy in your kitchen or on your tablet and keep adding to them.

Consider designating each day of the week so "What's for dinner?" becomes less of a challenge when your fuse is short at the end of a working day: Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, Pasta Wednesday (isn't that Prince Spaghetti night?) And don't forget to include a night where you finish all the leftovers in the fridge and a night for takeout—you deserve it after cooking all week!

Save the Iron Chef/Pinterest recipes for the weekend, when you don't have hungry hordes breathing down your neck as you wrestle with unfamiliar ingredients and methods.

Liza Baker is a health coach and employee wellness consultant. You can learn more about her at simply-healthcoaching.com. Learn more about her class offerings and register at eventbrite.com/o/simply-health-coaching-35250356233.

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Zen and the Art of Community-Supported Agriculture

By Angela Madaras

Celebrating, preserving, and sharing our areas rich Agro-Centric heritage is one of my favorite interests. A somewhat new land preservation project has gained my interest over the past year and is ongoing at the corner of Scio Church and Zeeb Road. Follow me on a journey of one family's dream passed on. This is yet another food-farm venture of Tantre` Farm's stewards, Richard Andres and Deb Lentz.

Deb Lentz and Richard Andres

Thanks to Richard's mother's desire to save historic farmland from development, and Scio Township's Land Preservation project inspired and guided by Barry Lonik (a long-time conservationist in Washtenaw County), HoneyBee U-Pick Farm's 160 acres is being planted with perennials. These plantings will include strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blight resistant nut trees, and more. The farm sold U-Pick and pre-picked berries for its first year opened to the public in spring 2021. Barry Lonik is a consultant to Scio Township, and other townships, for preventing development on historical farmland. The property that is now HoneyBee U-Pick Farm was originally owned by the Aprill family; established by the German immigrant Alan A. Aprill who arrived just after the Civil War. Much of Scio Valley was owned by the Aprills. Scio Township's Land Preservation Committee bought the land with a millage from its residents for $2.3 million with the goal of selling the farmland to farmers who agree to never develop the land. They also help the farmers apply for grants to help cover part of their cost. The land is in the Frederick G. Andres Trust, inspired by Richard's mother, Lois Andres, and her dream to save historic farmland for sustainable farming thus curbing development. The Andres' Trust paid $600,000 upfront for the land, which came from Lois selling farmland in Canton, and secured a temporary loan of $1.7 million. They are waiting for grant assistance to cover the rest of the purchase cost. The farm includes a barn and house which are being upgraded for continued use. I drive by daily and see the property being lovingly restored and planted, which makes me happy as a neighbor and organic gardener. I have a spiritual connection to our land and its people.

I sat down with Richard Andres of Tantre` Farm to learn more about their journey, their farm food projects, and their mission of operating a collection of agro-businesses with passion and mindfulness. I later spoke with Deb Lentz who is the "business" side of the business.

The property that is now HoneyBee U-Pick Farm was originally owned by the Aprill family; established by the German immigrant Alan A. Aprill who arrived just after the Civil War.

Angela Madaras: How did the time you spent at Ann Arbor Zen Temple inspire ideas on farming?

Richard Andres: I lived at the Ann Arbor Zen Center in the eighties where I gained experience in mindfulness and gardening, which I use today in operating Tantre` Farm (created in the early nineties). I am used to practicing mindfulness while working with community and finding what works for the greater good of the community and the whole of life: water, air, soil, humans, and animals. Eating healthy food was another gift as was learning how to be a service worker while living the austere life of a lay monk. This led me to pursue a greater vision of a vibrant and healthy climate for future generations. I learned about Permaculture which is a system of agriculture that uses a mix of trees, bushes, other perennial plants, and livestock to create a self-sustaining ecosystem that yields edible crops and flowers that attract bees and butterflies. *Agro Economy, Regenerative Farming, Sustainable Growing* as well as other names are used to describe a way of managing land in ways that will last for generations if the water, soil, air, and the cosmos are considered alive parts of our tender ecosystem-- all inter-connected. This is when my path moved me to envision Tantre` Farm.

Angela Madaras: How did your partner, and wife, Deb Lentz's past experience, her 20-year work as a teacher, and as an advocate for Agrarian Adventure inspire her life as a farmer and business owner?

Richard Andres: Deb is the one who operates the business and communication end of the farm. Deb grew up in the southeastern area of Minnesota in a small town called Lake City. Her father was an agriculture teacher at the high school and owned a 160-acre farm with beef cattle surrounded by the Mississippi River Bluffs. Deb learned how to garden, bake, and preserve food from her grandmother while her dad taught her to forage. After Deb graduated high school, her dad took her, the family, and her friends to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) where she would eventually guide many others on water and land throughout the coming years. These wilderness experiences in protected lands led to a strong interest in environmental education for Deb which she integrated into her elementary school classrooms in Central Minnesota over the next ten years. Deb met me in 1994. She moved here in 1995 and taught at Ezra Eby Elementary School in Napoleon for another five years while farming on off hours. My day job was as a fulltime timber frame carpenter, and I would come home every day to farm in the evenings and on the weekends. When our daughter, Ariana, was born in 2001, Deb quit teaching and I quit carpentry to devote our full-time energies into starting a family and a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Farm, where education, local ecology, and feeding a supportive community was the focus. As our daughter began school at Honey Creek Community School in Ann Arbor, Deb helped found a Wellness Committee, a Farm to School program, and supported the school garden in order to continue to find ways to help children be in touch with the earth and making healthy food choices. During those years and onward, she also didn't leave teaching too far behind: she helped pilot and develop the Agrarian Adventure's "Farmer in the Classroom" programming and currently serves on the board of directors for the Agrarian Adventure (a nonprofit that works with schools to connect students with food, health, community and agriculture). We have a devoted group of employees and people who contribute.

During the seasons, eight to twenty employees and some volunteers are spread out between Tantre` Farm in Chelsea and the Aprill Farm. Liz Wizeman lives on Scio Church Road in her own renovated homestead, also previously in the Aprill family. She works around the HoneyBee Farm, carefully clearing out the home and barn, ensuring its history will remain intact and remembered, along with many hours of harvesting, weeding, mulching, and planting perennial food crops on the property. The property is also a site where arborists and tree trimming companies bring logs and wood chips to create a free fertility and carbon source for the farm. They are building berm structures modeled after Hugel Mounds in Austria. (You can learn more about Hugel Mounds at almanac.com/what-hugelkultur-ultimate-raised-bed.) Mound culture brings carbon into the ground for nutrients. Think of it as a large and permanently raised bed from which food can be grown efficiently and with little watering and fertilizing.

Liz Wizeman works around the HoneyBee Farm, carefully clearing out the home and barn, ensuring its history will remain intact and remembered, along with many hours of harvesting, weeding, mulching, and planting perennial food crops on the property.

Ryan Poe, project manager for Immune Booster CSA shared his passionate drive for the project Tantre` created as a way to bring value to locally prepared foods together with Tantre's fresh produce as well as other farmer's products.

I also connected with Ryan Poe, project manager for Immune Booster CSA. He shared his passionate drive for the project Tantre` created as a way to bring value to locally prepared foods together with Tantre's fresh produce as well as other farmer's products. It was designed to support local food ventures while serving the community during the beginning of the pandemic.

Ryan Poe said, "I love the Immune Booster project and concept because when you zoom out a bit, I'm joining hands with all these local talents, helping drive our local food economy, reducing countless amounts of fossil fuel miles from food being shipped all over the world following the in-season narrative of seasonal eating. I also happen to love to cook, and I grew up on a small market style farm where we grew produce, raised animals, pickled, canned and processed food as the warmer season came to pass each year. My grandma was a professional chef and lived right across the street from me for the first fifteen years of my life. I worked with her from sun up to sun down long after everyone else had given up. I loved everything about the experience from starting the seed and hatching new chickens to eating apple pie from apples we had canned back on those summer and fall days. So, to sum it up, yes, I love this project. The challenges are making the menus each week, and then writing the weekly newsletter explaining the products in the Booster Share and

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According to Deb Lentz, ecological economy is what they are attempting to create with both farms: Tantre` Farm and Honeybee U-Pick, as well as their Immune Booster CSA.

offering ideas and humor to close it out. The newsletter is often a labor of love. It's a challenging dynamic to write them each week and have new and interesting content in them. The main target there is gratification and collaboration, followed closely by humor. Food is fun! It's also a journey about where the food came from, who grew it, who cooked it and why it's important to support local food businesses and grow our own economy. This project was designed to help out quite a few people that were not sure if they were going to survive the pandemic, so it's a constant feel-good narrative. The collaborations and bridges that have blossomed from this project are also so rewarding as well."

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Richard and Deb, along with their daughter, Ariana

Continued on next page

Zen and the Art of Community-Supported Agriculture

I have been receiving this CSA share over the winter and both my husband and I find it fun, tasty, unique, and satisfying. We also found out about other local food producers we otherwise may not have discovered. In this way Tantre` created a market for small local producers.

Value added nutrients and products made with primarily local produce, grown in our bio-region (within about 100 miles of our area), are added to Tantre`'s weekly Immune Booster CSA box. It is available all year. The box includes products like The Brinery's fermented goods, Harvest Kitchen's prepared foods, sourdough bread from Raterman Bread, Vietnamese cuisine from Ginger Deli, Detroit Mushroom Company, and many more local food businesses. There is a link on the Tantre` Farm's website with participating vendors. Anyone can sign up for their weekly newsletter directly from Tantre` Farm's website. One can purchase week to week without making a long-term commitment for Immune Booster Shares. There is also a seasonal vegetable and fruit CSA from Tantre` Farm, which demands a little more commitment as they have served over 400 customers weekly during the summer and fall growing seasons, especially during these last couple of pandemic years, where feeding the community became a true commitment of support.

They are allowing nature to manage the land including air blown aspen spurs, dandelions which enrich and break down the soils polyculture, while berries and trees together feed people and place as we reconnect as a part of the ecosystem.

According to Deb Lentz, ecological economy is what they are attempting to create with both farms: Tantre` Farm and Honeybee U-Pick, as well as their Immune Booster CSA. This increases the local food economy and lowers carbon output and waste of trucking food. It is a more "clean" and gentle system in the long run. Ecology education demonstrates an understanding of the biome of a particular species, living and nonliving parts that are interdependent that develop this ecological consciousness. Trees are deeply rooted and can survive a drought and flood. Some of the trees will be ready in three years. Whole, unprocessed, complex plant-based carbohydrates and proteins flow from the trees and other perennials providing nutrient rich soil. Humans are the same as bacteria; we all want to digest carbohydrates, because it is more efficient as it builds good bacteria in the soil and our guts. The trees and animals the soil supports create a better environment. They are allowing nature to manage the land including air blown aspen spurs, dandelions which enrich and break down the soils polyculture, while berries and trees together feed people and place as we reconnect as a part of the ecosystem.

Ancient oak on HoneyBee U-Pick Farm

Farm crew pyramid

Our long-term vision is what Aldo Leopold referred to in A Sand County Almanac , as a "land ethic" where we celebrate all biomes and ecosystems, making efforts to rebuild native biomes, and in developing an understanding of how they work together.
–Deb Lentz

Angela Madaras: Deb, what is your long-term vision and how might people engage to assist in making these dreams come true?

Deb Lentz: Our long-term vision is what Aldo Leopold referred to in *A Sand County Almanac* , as a "land ethic" where we celebrate all biomes and ecosystems, making efforts to rebuild native biomes, and in developing an understanding of how they work together. We would like to create our human culture and economy from that rather than imposing extractive, industrial mechanisms that undermine the health of all beings. The earth is calling her children back to "step gently upon her skin."

HoneyBee U-pick Farm is closer to Ann Arbor and could be a good location for outdoor education about sustainability, farming, edible farm walks, parts of the plant lessons, relationship to bacteria, fungus, insects for both perennial and annual plants, web of life interrelationship of plants and animals. Emerson and Honey Creek Community Schools, being just around the corner, along with a number of daycares and preschools could really benefit from this type of programming. In 2022, it also will be a new Summer CSA distribution site for those members who live nearby, providing great u-pick opportunities for our members.

Two children helping Richard plant some of the 300 chestnut trees planted during the Nut Festival

Angela Madaras: Richard, who inspires you in the agricultural, educational, and spiritual arena?

Richard Andres: Some of the people who inspired me are Wes Jackson, Fred Kirschenmann, Wendell Berry, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Wangari Muta Maathai to name a few well-known people, along with many neighbors, friends, and community members. Social justice, mindfulness, and purpose align with austerity and seriously hard work in this sizeable co-adventure. The folks who inspire our efforts have been through experiences from which we learned as well. Our "business" is a co-creation between many people and businesses working together for a better agro-economy society based on community caring for all its members to include soil, air, water, critters, animals and people.

Social justice, mindfulness, and purpose align with austerity and seriously hard work in this sizeable co-adventure.

–Richard Andres

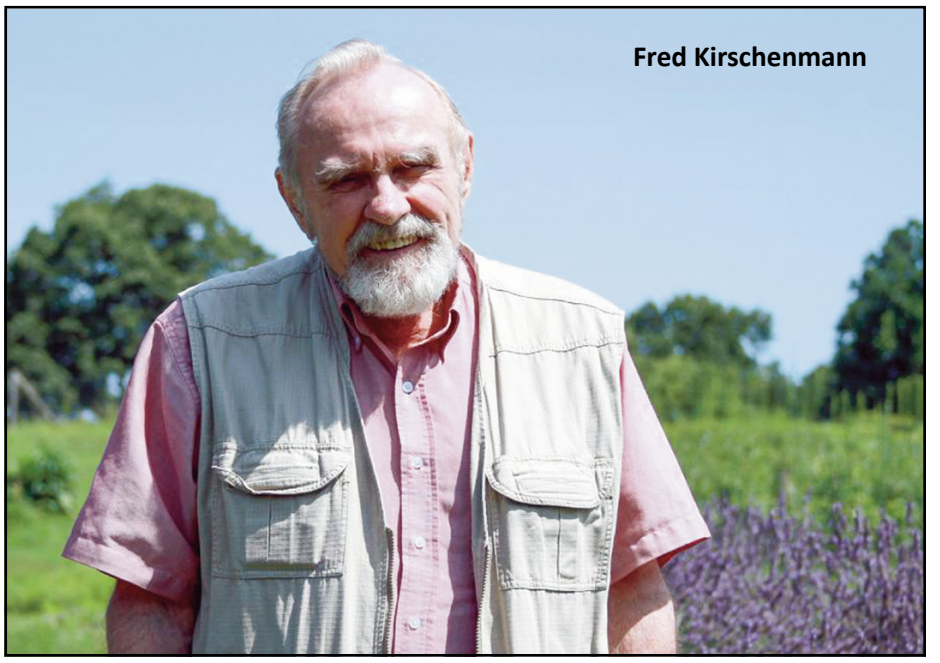
I was lucky enough to interview one of Richard's mentors Fred Kirschenmann. He is retired now but was the director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and is still active in sustainable farming as the president of the board at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture outside of New York City. He began educating farmers and non-farmers alike about the importance of organic practices and a spiritual community where everyone takes care of their neighbors and land for generations to come. He transitioned his father's North Dakota 1,800 acre farm from conventional to organic in 1976. Kirschenmann still runs his family's third generation farm.

Angela Madaras: How do you see climate change, the cosmos, the magnetosphere, solar rays, an expanding global economy, and an increasing population affecting our time on the planet? Can we nurture mother earth enough for her to let us live within the totality of all life—considering how rapid the changes are occurring in real-time? Can you offer "Hopefulness in Action?" And what actions do you see are realistic for creating a local-sustainable food system based on organic-polyculture methods of farming and in creating greater demand through market outlets that connect all the dots, so to speak?

Fred Kirschenmann: Well, every issue you mention will give us significant challenges. However, we also know from a long history of our planet, that it does have significant capacity to regenerate. The key problem is that we humans have now developed a long history of introducing a culture which assumes that we are "the masters and possessors" of nature and that we must "bend" her "to our will." That is the culture we must change, and Aldo Leopold proposed the center of such a culture shift which recognizes that we humans are simply "plain members and citizens" of earth's "biotic community." This culture shift will not be easy to accomplish, but in a small way it has already begun because the "masters and possessors" approach is already beginning to unravel since all the inputs we have used to achieve our goal are in a state of depletion, and at least a few of the next, younger generation have begun to see that and have begun to relate to nature as partners rather than possessors. We may not be at 20% of that generation yet, but I see an increasing number evolving, but cannot yet predict that the needed shift will happen, given the time we as a planet and people have left, but I am "hopeful."

The key problem is that we humans have now developed a long history of introducing a culture which assumes that we are "the masters and possessors" of nature and that we must "bend" her "to our will."

–Fred Kirschenmann



Fred Kirschenmann

Angela Madaras: Do you have any advice to offer younger organic farmers? Especially when some community members do not understand this type of agriculture and the spiritual connection to the land. What do people need to understand based on the need to change for the better?

Fred Kirschenmann: I think it is important to for them to form, and or, join, communities of young farmers who have begun to move in this direction. In Iowa, such a community is the "Practical Farmers of Iowa," and as we mentioned in our conversation, CSA's are another option.

Continued on next page

Zen and the Art of Community-Supported Agriculture

Brilliant autumn storm rolling in over the freshly mulched strawberry fields at HoneyBee during the Nut Festival

Angela Madaras: Do you think humans are ready to commit to caring for one another and our mother? Or could it be too late? You mentioned the 20% needed for a revolution in agriculture transition. Can you elaborate?

Fred Kirschenmann: I have recently been encouraged by the new literature which has been published—James Rebanks, *Pastoral Song: A Farmer's Journey*; Paul Freedman, *Why Food Matters*; Beth Hoffman, *Bet The Farm: The Dollars and Sense of Growing Food in America*, and, Stephen Erickson, *Regenerative Agriculture: The Climate Crisis Solution*. Also, I did not refer to the 20% as a measure for agriculture, but as a measure of the young generation!

HoneyBee is a place for people to find some quiet, connect with nature, and explore our relationship to each other and the earth.

Tantre` Farms will continue to have their annual Nut Festival at HoneyBee U-Pick farm in the fall, invite school groups to harvest berries and nuts and explore the land through nature hikes, and they have dreams of community flower gardens, and community bee keeping with plenty of volunteer opportunities. HoneyBee is a place for people to find some quiet, connect with nature, and explore our relationship to each other and the earth. Through active mindfulness we can find our interconnectedness and direct it toward a good ecological balance through deeply rooted relationships. We would like to encourage our community of eaters to learn how to live and share with one another—both our time and our food.

Visit Deb Lentz and Richard Andres at *Tantre` Farm at 2510 Hayes Road, Chelsea, MI. Learn more about their businesses and mission at tantrefarm.com, email info@Tantrefarm.com, or call (734) 475-4323.*

Tea Time with Peggy

The Middle Way of Oolong

By Peggy Alaniz

As I sit staring out my window, the trees are budding with the first green leaves of the season. It brings hope of the new and the promise of warmer weather. The light flutter of snow brings memories of the wintery past. A typical Michigan spring vacillates between unseasonably hot days and blizzard like conditions. It is neither winter nor summer. Spring is in the middle—just like Oolong tea.

Oolong tea comes from the camellia sinensis plant. It is also a type of tea that, until recently, was not part of the mainstream market. It was more common as a loose-leaf tea. Oolong tea leaves have a unique shape. Often you will find them rolled into balls or twisted into long strands. Oolong tea is somewhere in the middle of green and black because of the way it is processed.

Typically, Oolong leaves are left to wither. The rolling and twisting of the leaves help the flavor process. You will find that some grades of Oolong are greener, while others are more dark or black. Since Oolong tea is neither green nor black, the French refer to it as “blue” tea. To the Chinese, the word Oolong translates into Black Dragon. One thing for sure, it contains a powerhouse of health benefits.

Oolong tea, because of it being somewhere between black and green, contains the health benefits of both. Some of the benefits attributed to it are improved brain function, stable blood sugar, support in fat loss, helps fight fatty liver disease, strengthens bones, fights cancer, and it lowers triglycerides and cholesterol. With all these health benefits, it would be good to incorporate a regular cup of Oolong tea into your daily health regimen.

Oolong has a complex flavor profile depending upon the grade. Some can be grassy like green tea or woody like black tea. It can also have a honey aroma with a bit of a floral flavor. You may have to try a couple of different blends to find the right one for you. With all the health benefits it will be worth taking the time to find one you like.

One of my favorite things in the spring is to watch horses run in a grassy field. This brings to mind other equestrian endeavors and with it a famous cocktail known as a Mint Julep. Oolong goes great with mint!

Oolong Mint Julep Sweet Tea

- To make the Mint Syrup:
- 1 cup white sugar (beet or cane)
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup finely chopped mint leaves

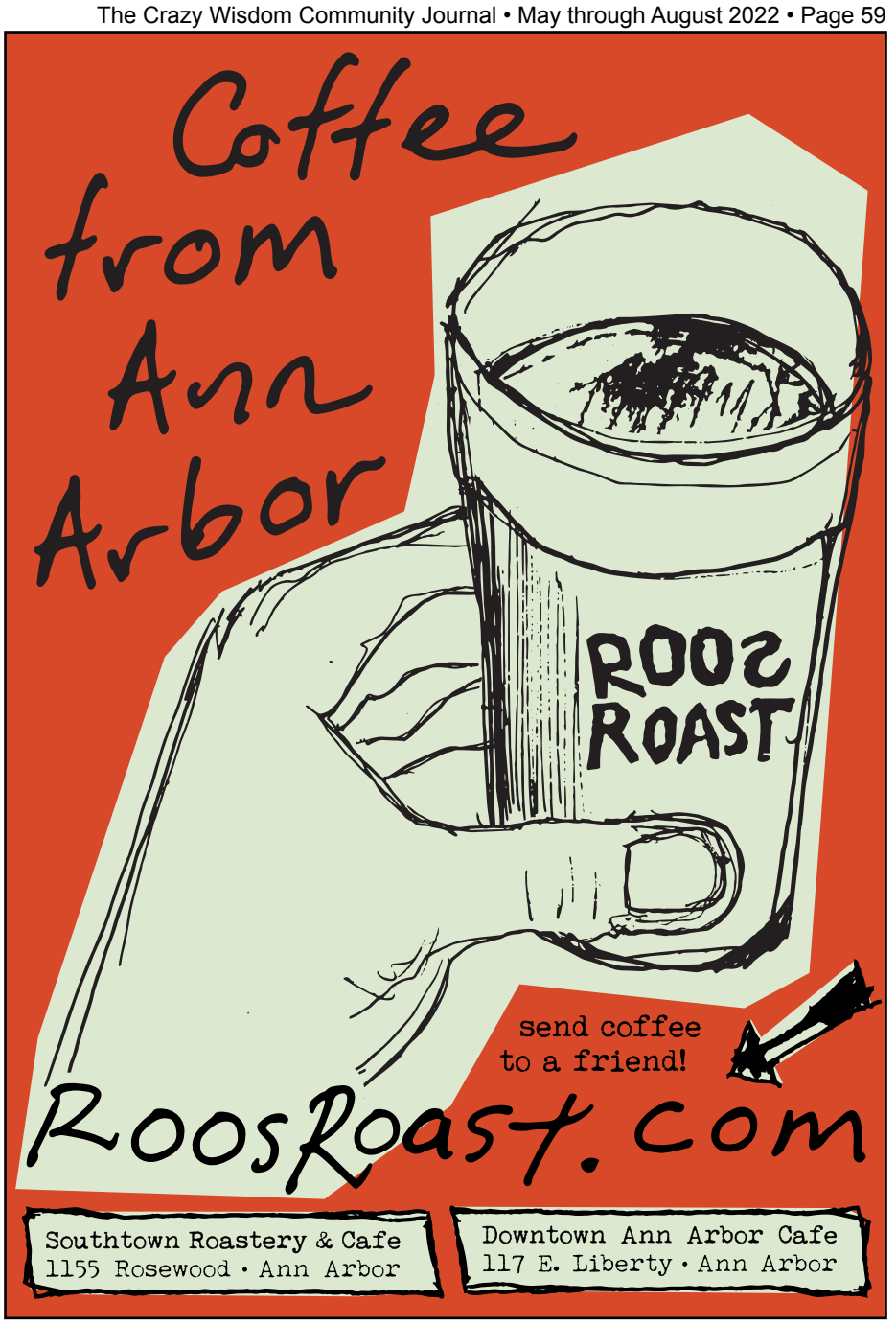
Combine mint, sugar, and water in a small saucepan on the stove under low heat to medium heat stir till all the sugar is dissolved. Bring mixture to a boil then reduce the heat and continue to stir. Allow it to simmer for 5 minutes. Then cool and strain the syrup mixture.

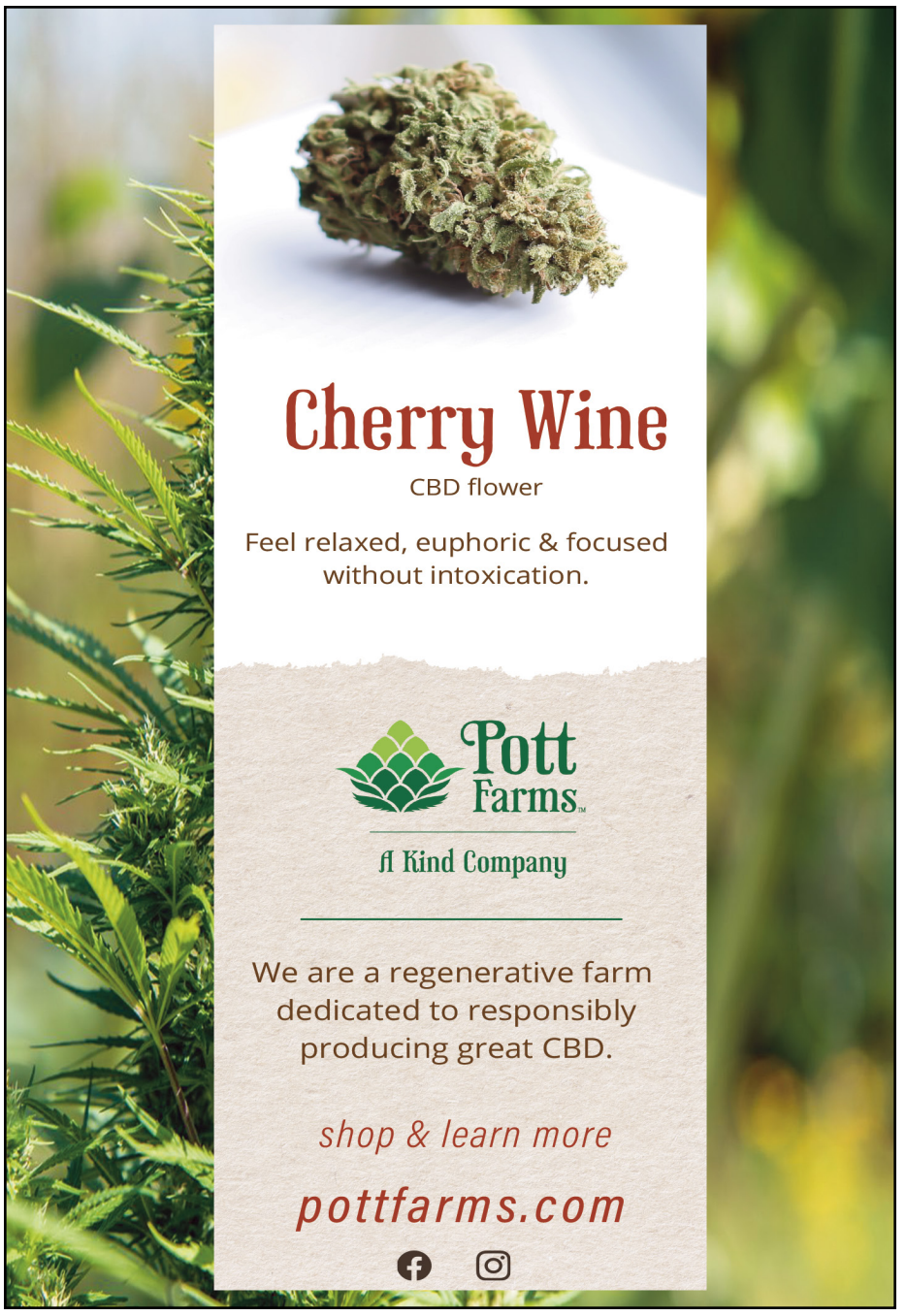
To make the tea:

Two tablespoons of Oolong tea (the greener the better for this recipe) per 8 ounces of boiling water. Steep for 10 minutes. Strain and cool.

To a class filled halfway with ice, add a shot of your favorite bourbon. Then add two tablespoons of the mint syrup per 8 ounces of Oolong tea. A squeeze of lemon makes it even more refreshing. Add lemon and mint to garnish. Sip and enjoy!

Peggy Alaniz is a graduate of The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University of Boulder, Colorado. She has taught Writing at Jackson and Baker College. While attending Naropa University she worked at Celestial Seasonings Tea company. In her free time, she writes poetry, studies reiki, and karate. A lifelong tea enthusiast she continues to study tea, herbs, and tisanes.

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By Rosina Newton

(Editor's Note – Rosina Newton is a regular and valued contributing writer for the Crazy Wisdom Journal*. We haven't typically published futuristic essays, but we have made an exception for this utopian thought piece, and particularly so as we begin to emerge from two years of a worldwide pandemic.)*

Dear Ancestors of the 2020's,

I am a young person studying our history, and I felt inspired to write to you — from your future!
We are learning in our history about your era, and I feel so sad about your plight. We all do, really. How dark and scary those times must have felt for you! I decided to write you a letter (because we can do that now) to let you know how things have turned out.

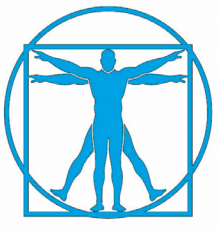
"I am a young person studying our history, and I felt inspired to write to you — from your future! We are learning in our history about your era, and I feel so sad about your plight. We all do, really. How dark and scary those times must have felt for you!"

We know humans have been changing since the beginning of time. In our Learnings, we look at historical moments—the biggest turning points—that helped humans and all of Life to survive to today. One of those turning points in our Land is your era, the 2020's.

Because of the intense stress of your time, so many changes began to happen. Right where you are right now, things must seem dire, in chaos, and irreversible. But no! The collective evolution actually *sped up* because of all the hardships humans weathered together then. We call your era the Dark Times, but what happens afterwards we call the New Renaissance! If it hadn't been for all of those extreme stressors converging at the same time, we might not have made it as a society to survive and thrive to today.

In our Thanksgivings many of us include gratitude for our Ancestors. We give thanks for all actions taken throughout history that enabled us to be alive now in our beautiful Earth Home. I hope this helps you have more hope, and understanding of how your actions led to our point in history.

THE NEW RENAISSANCE



The New Renaissance is a really exciting period in history for us to study. We learn that in human history we usually didn't change unless we experienced drastic suffering that forced us to make changes. That is what you're going through right now. There were several false starts and dead ends in your efforts to resolve all of these simultaneous challenges. The ultimate result was that the most effective solutions won out, helping humanity not only to cope but to heal and eventually thrive, individually and collectively.

Where you are right now is where we mark the very beginning of the burgeoning new culture that grew out of all those emergencies. That's why, when we got this assignment, I wanted to write to someone in your time. It really was a sea change in human society on so many different levels.

We know the original story of *The Hundredth Monkey* was fictional, but it's still a metaphor for what actually happens in our collective consciousness. Simon Sinek's *Law of Diffusion of Innovation* explains the idea also: that when a certain number of people in a society adopt a new belief, only then will the belief spread enough so that most people put that belief into practice. People were forced by the extreme circumstances of the Dark Times to create positive changes and new belief systems, and take action based on healthier beliefs.

> "There is a tendency to think that what we see in the present moment we will continue to see. We forget how often in this century we have been astonished by the sudden crumbling of institutions, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible.
>
> To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives.
>
> If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.
>
> And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory."
>
> —Howard Zinn

Between your time and the New Renaissance::

- Organic agriculture, permaculture, regenerative agriculture, native habitat restoration, and other Land-healing practices became the mainstream, while toxic, destructive, and extractive Land-use practices fell by the wayside.
- Businesses that disrespected their employees – or sold toxic, extractive, or senseless products – either evolved into a more conscious mission and method or simply failed.
- An infamous billionaire from your time – I won't tell you who! – had a spiritual epiphany. For the rest of his life he used his money and power to support solutions that helped reverse the ills. Many people became inspired by this, supporting powerful solutions to our survival.
- There was a blossoming of Community Groups, such as Imagination Cafes, citizen groups, book clubs, altruist teams, and more. These communities collaborated, and became forces for positive change.
- Education expanded beyond the "school," including internet classes and what you called podcasts. Wise teachers emerged – from these venues and Community Groups – and became Leaders during The New Renaissance.
- Self-care practices became more widespread across all communities. Massage, yoga, Qigong, psychotherapy, nutritional psychiatry, mindfulness meditation, and self-expression through the Arts flourished. Along with other changes, this expansion sparked a health revolution.

There are so many shifts that happened during this time I can only begin to tell you! I'll just continue by sharing how we live today and some stories of how we got here. Then you can understand how transformative your time really is. I realize that much of what I will describe to you will seem foreign to you, so bear with me.

LEARNING

As I hinted before, the Education Revolution began with a profusion of podcasts, webinars, and community education. Also, learning systems of your time—Montessori, Waldorf, and others—merged with what you called "homeschooling." This all evolved into what we have today. You could call it our Life School. Our "school"—what we call Learning—is such an ever-present, cyclical experience that it is a little hard to explain to you because it is not really separate from our "work" or "family" or "play" life. It starts when we're born, at home with our parents. As John Holt says in *How Children Learn*, "Learning

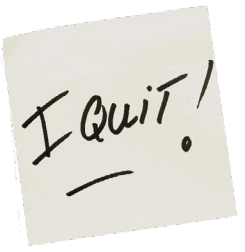
is as natural as breathing." We are given such freedom to be who we are, that we naturally learn a lot!

Really, Learning starts *before* we were born! It started with our parents, because they were taught all their lives about what it means to be a parent, and what a young person needs for healthy, strong development into adulthood. All our relationships—as parents, siblings, friends, partners, leaders, and workmates—require skills, of course. We practice these skills throughout life. As we get closer to adulting—what ancestors called "puberty"—we start learning more and more about intimate relationships and childcaring. But all our lives we witness these skills in our adults and practiced childcaring with younger Locals.

In our Life School, people of all ages also learn through hands-on activities directly in their field of interest. Not long after the Pandemic subsided, apprenticeships burgeoned. Young people like me try many different apprenticeships and subjects as our interests evolve. We enter adulthood knowing many life skills we need to succeed.

WORKING

> "Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put into every heart." - Rumi



As you might imagine, the pandemic and The Great Resignation of the early 2020's had a profound effect on work life. Workplace equity and health became a high priority. Businesses that evolved, survived. For example, restaurants that sold unhealthy food or refused to pay workers a living wage closed their doors. More Local services, entrepreneurs, trades, and material suppliers grew from the ashes. Only enterprises modeled after what you called a "B Corporation" succeeded. The ideals of the original B Corporation continue today in our Work: To have a beneficial impact on workers, community, society, and our environment.

"As you might imagine, the pandemic and The Great Resignation of the early 2020's had a profound effect on work life. Workplace equity and health became a high priority. Businesses that evolved, survived. For example, restaurants that sold unhealthy food or refused to pay workers a living wage closed their doors."

Now days, when we decide we need something, we most often trade or purchase used products. Nothing valuable goes to a "landfill." You might be surprised to learn—we don't even have landfills! Our entire "economy" has naturally responded to our need for ethical, ecological products and means of production. Stores don't look anything like historical stores.

We have entire systems designed to reuse products. We have an intricate but easy marketplace where we find what material products we're looking for. People enter their *Discards* or *Needs* into the system. Most often, another person's *Discard* is available to fulfill our *Need!* Goods are transported to us on the same eco-transport system that carries people.

THE DIVISIONS

We've been learning about the systems you lived inside of during your time. In your culture you had distinct differences between school, family, work, and play life. The Divisions, we call them. You see, we're not confined to a school desk or an office chair for eight hours a day. You were learning and doing work in such difficult environments, not necessarily in areas of your own interest. It is mind-blitzing to me and my learning team to consider so much violence—emotional, spiritual, and even physical—in each Division of your life.

"There is so much dysfunction in our history that it is hard for us to fathom. That is why we learn deeply about these events in our history, so that we can heal from the collective trauma and so we avoid repeating these painful mistakes."

Many of us in our learning group, myself and the instructors included, must take time to process so many feelings when we learn about the brutality throughout our history. There is so much dysfunction in our history that it is hard for us to fathom. That is why we learn deeply about these events in our history, so that we can heal from the collective trauma and so we avoid repeating these painful mistakes.

CONFLICT

Based on many movies we watch from your era and before, you'd probably say our culture is "boring." It's funny—we don't use that word very much at all now days! It's true we don't have as much chaos and violence as we learn about from history and see in old

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"...we do have conflict. In our time it's not completely idyllic or utopian. We just handle disagreements so differently than you did. Our goal in conflict is to have a peaceful and healthy, or at least benign, outcome."

movies. But don't misunderstand me please—we do have conflict. In our time it's not completely idyllic or utopian. We just handle disagreements so differently than you did. Our goal in conflict is to have a peaceful and healthy, or at least benign, outcome.

First of all, now days seeing a therapist is as common and natural as "going to the gym" was during your time. Mental health is taught throughout our Learnings. It is a comfortable, natural subject—just like dental health. Everybody knows about it and talks about it openly—compared with what we learned about your secrecy, stigma, and suffering around it. We all have a common understanding and a language about our mental health.

Also, we get most of our physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs met from birth and throughout our life. Our parents and Locals know us well, and express love and appreciation for us every day. On the flipside, they also catch us when we need a Learning! All of this combined helps us stay balanced and joyful in life, and surely prevents a lot of conflict.

We know from a very young age how to love and care for each other. We learn very early how to appreciate every unique person in our Local and beyond. We know we are all human and we make mistakes. We practice forgiveness. So, when conflicts between people happen, most of us have the skills to resolve them in an amicable way on our own. If we have trouble getting to peace on our own, we know where to go and who to ask for help. It rarely leads to violence in our world.

First, we work on resolution within our family or between families with skills we learned over a lifetime and generations. If the conflict doesn't resolve completely in our family groups, we have Local counselors and mediators to help us figure out our solutions. If there are conflicts between people in different Locals, then we have Regional counselors, see?

BUILDING

Learning about the practice of Land demolition is another hard one for us. To watch historical videos of trees, soil, habitat, and Life being scraped away to build farmland or new buildings is physically painful to many. Our minds are blitzed to learn about sturdy buildings also being demolished, knowing that more raw materials and Earth resources had to be used to build a new structure.

Now days, whenever an organization, family, or Local needs a building or home, we remodel an existing structure whenever possible. New buildings and remodels are built with recycled materials and energy efficient technology that was developed during the New Renaissance.

You probably wouldn't recognize the place! We've seen old photos of your time, with all the concrete, parking lots, and "shopping malls," as you called them. Highways and roads everywhere! Once our Ancestors implemented in-town mass transit and inter-regional light rail, many of the roads were no longer used and were abandoned. Whole industries were built around repurposing the pavement materials into new structures, and Locals began planting trees and guilds back then, where the pavement used to be. You may not know what guilds are yet. Rather than just a tree, we plant a whole community of understory plants around the tree too. This becomes the "seed garden" of a new healthy habitat.

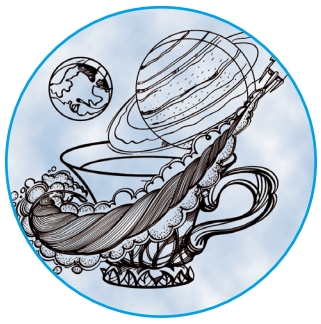
Letter continued
on next page

Love Letter FROM OUR FUTURE

IMAGINATION CAFES

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." Albert Einstein



We watch movies and study books our Ancestors created depicting the future. So many are quite dystopian! We often feel confused why so much energy and creativity was channeled into a vision of what you surely *don't* want. Some of those visions did happen, unfortunately. We came way too close to other self-destructive visions manifesting. Now days, we understand that our thoughts, words, and imagination have power, and we can put our power towards solutions and beauty.

Imagination Cafes started forming in your lifetime, and we still have them today. This is where Locals get together just for fun, or to brainstorm solutions to our problems. We imagine the most outlandishly beautiful world possible. We picture outcomes that we want. Some of us talk about all of the details. Some of us take these ideas to create art: paintings, sculptures, architectural models; write songs, poems, scripts, diagrams, flow charts, organizational charts - anything! Imagining the best-case scenarios is powerful. This is how we design many efficient and beautiful solutions. We always have great food, drink, and music, and include Thanksgivings for what we have now.

HEALTH

The New Renaissance was really profound in the fields of medicine and agriculture. A great shift happened as our Ancestors learned about the links between soil health, food, and human health. The field of microbiomology emerged around your time, studying the microbiome in our bodies and soil. This was one major breakthrough in healing diseases of both humans and plants.

Starting in your time, research increased logarithmically in many fields: from behavioral medicine, mind-body and herbal medicine to permaculture and regenerative organic agriculture. Scientific, peer-reviewed studies all over the world explored the common materials and methods of folk healers, alternative medicine practitioners, and organic gardeners and farmers. Some natural ways disappeared, while many more were proven beneficial, tripling the remedies available to farmers and patients alike. Our Local farmers and homesteaders have amazingly beneficent, efficient, and productive systems that grow most of our food and herbs. You would be amazed to see our farms today.

"Our hospitals now are oases — serene, artistic centers of healing. Fresh, organic food is served — healing in and of itself. All caregiving staff are trained to provide the highest level of therapeutic communication..."

The vital precursor to these studies — and to much of the New Renaissance itself — was that university research of all kinds became independent of commercial financial influence. A whole new body of knowledge emerged. In a ripple effect, healing professions became divorced from pharmaceutical industries and agriculture grew away from chemical industries. Medicine shifted its focus to healing core causes, so doctors of all specialties are highly trained in nutrition and microbiomology. The healing team is now a collaboration of doctors with psychotherapists, exercise physiologists, the patients, and their families. Doctors incorporate food, herbs, exercise, mental and environmental health into their prescriptions.

Our hospitals now are oases — serene, artistic centers of healing. Fresh, organic food is served — healing in and of itself. All caregiving staff are trained to provide the highest level of therapeutic communication and environments. The buildings are architecturally inspiring. The interiors, and especially the healing rooms, are full of rich colors, textiles, natural lighting, and custom music for each patient. The grounds are landscaped with the most beautiful natural designs, and every window looks out onto nature. There are walking paths and courtyards. The healing process incorporates body, mind, and soul. It may include the whole family and the Locals. Self-care modalities I mentioned earlier — massage, Tai Chi, etc. — are available to patients, along with reps from every faith. The most advanced healing technologies are available in the hospital to cure and heal.

THE GREAT UNION

"We are strongest when we see the most vulnerable in our society, bear witness to their struggles, and then work to create systems to make it better." —Stacey Abrams

I'm sure you're wondering what happened to the Great Divisions. We study this period a lot. First, there were some organizations dedicated to healing. *Braver Angels* was one and *StoryCorp's One Small Step* initiative was another. They taught people how to talk with each other again.

Then there was another ripple effect. Community groups sprang up to continue this work. There were citizen action groups who met to study history and the Constitution together. Groups formed around studying the work of Leaders, past and present: Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hanh, Howard Zinn, Grace Lee Boggs, Brené Brown, Ijeoma Oluo, Don Miguel Ruiz, Marshall Rosenberg, Greta Thunberg, Vandana Shiva, Buckminster Fuller.

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." — R. Buckminster Fuller

Eventually the new reality that emerged was so delicious—the new systems and opportunities enabled everyone to prosper so successfully—that the Divisions simply dissolved. New systems of society emerged providing multiple paths to prosperity, and everyone had equitable access to these services. The resulting social evolution was really quite remarkable and rapid.

CLIMATE CRISIS

"When you look at the Earth from the space station, it's absolutely magical. You're not that far away, so you still have a relatively close-up view. But you can see the curvature and you see the atmosphere. It glows in blue. It is absolutely breathtaking the first time you see it. It's the most beautiful scenery you could possibly imagine.

When you're on the Earth, you feel that everything is so vast, everything is endless. You have a hard time understanding how limited we are. Then, when you take a step back and you see the Earth in its entirety, you suddenly understand that we live in an oasis in the cosmos. All around us is nothing, no life, blackness, emptiness, absolutely nothing—apart from this blue ball with everything we need to sustain human life, and life in general, which is absolutely fragile. It makes you want to cherish the Earth and protect it, the more you see it from space."

—Thomas Pesquet, astronaut

You are probably wondering how we managed to get out of the Climate Crisis. Again, the transformation was amazing during your lifetime. Massive action was taken. Leaders worked together, diverting all resources in the wisest, most creative ways to reverse climate change. This was a three-pronged approach called TEL that involved Technology, Education, and Land-use remediation.

First, carbon capture technology was installed in strategic locations around the world. The rollout was planned with magnificent cooperation, employing thousands of people. Phase One was completed within two years! Industries simultaneously reduced carbon emissions; resources and technology were implemented for their success.

"You are probably wondering how we managed to get out of the Climate Crisis. Again, the transformation was amazing during your lifetime. Massive action was taken. Leaders worked together, diverting all resources in the wisest, most creative ways to reverse climate change."

Second, climate science education was shared around the world using the most creative teams of scientists, educators, and multimedia artists. Again, thousands were employed, and the resulting actions by Leaders, organizations, and individuals led to the success of the TEL Project**.**

Third, because of the educational component, Land-use practices were implemented around the world employing the carbon-sequestering power of plants and the soil microbiome. Many governments instituted moratoriums on tree removal and land clearing. Tree planting began in earnest on public and private properties, and all maintenance shifted to organic.

When we first learned about the historical TEL Project—seeing the before-and-after graphs and visual documentation—many of us were overcome with emotion. This is one of the most inspiring points in our history, and many of us refer to this point when we have that feeling of "I can't."

COLORS DAY

We celebrate Colors Day every year on the Saturday after the Summer Solstice. Colors Day was originally inspired by the "Humanæ" project of artist Angélica Dass. It's a festival celebrating the beautiful range of colors among among our peoples and the diversity of our cultures. Every Local group is different, but we all have a variety of modern and cultural music, food, fashion, and other arts.

We have tree-planting events. We have performances of all kinds. Locals and guests of all ages perform multimedia music, dance, comedy, historical drama, and other arts. Some art is created from technology that would be hard to describe to you; I wish you could see it. Some performances celebrate our Ancestors who were the solution-makers: those who used invention, art, philosophy, and all kinds of ways to help us evolve out of the Dark Times, to survive, to be alive today. Individually we often give thanks to the solution-makers every day, but our Colors Day is where we really get together to learn about and celebrate these pioneers in a big way. It is so much fun, and it lasts all day long and into the night!

Thank you for receiving my letter—I hope that you have enjoyed it.

I want share one final message: We are now living in the world our Ancestors imagined, full of such natural beauty that it brings tears to our eyes. We are living in grateful awe of our capacity to be alive together, moving and breathing in this amazing world of abundance.

In the words of one of your Leaders: "Live long and prosper!"

Jennifer Carson

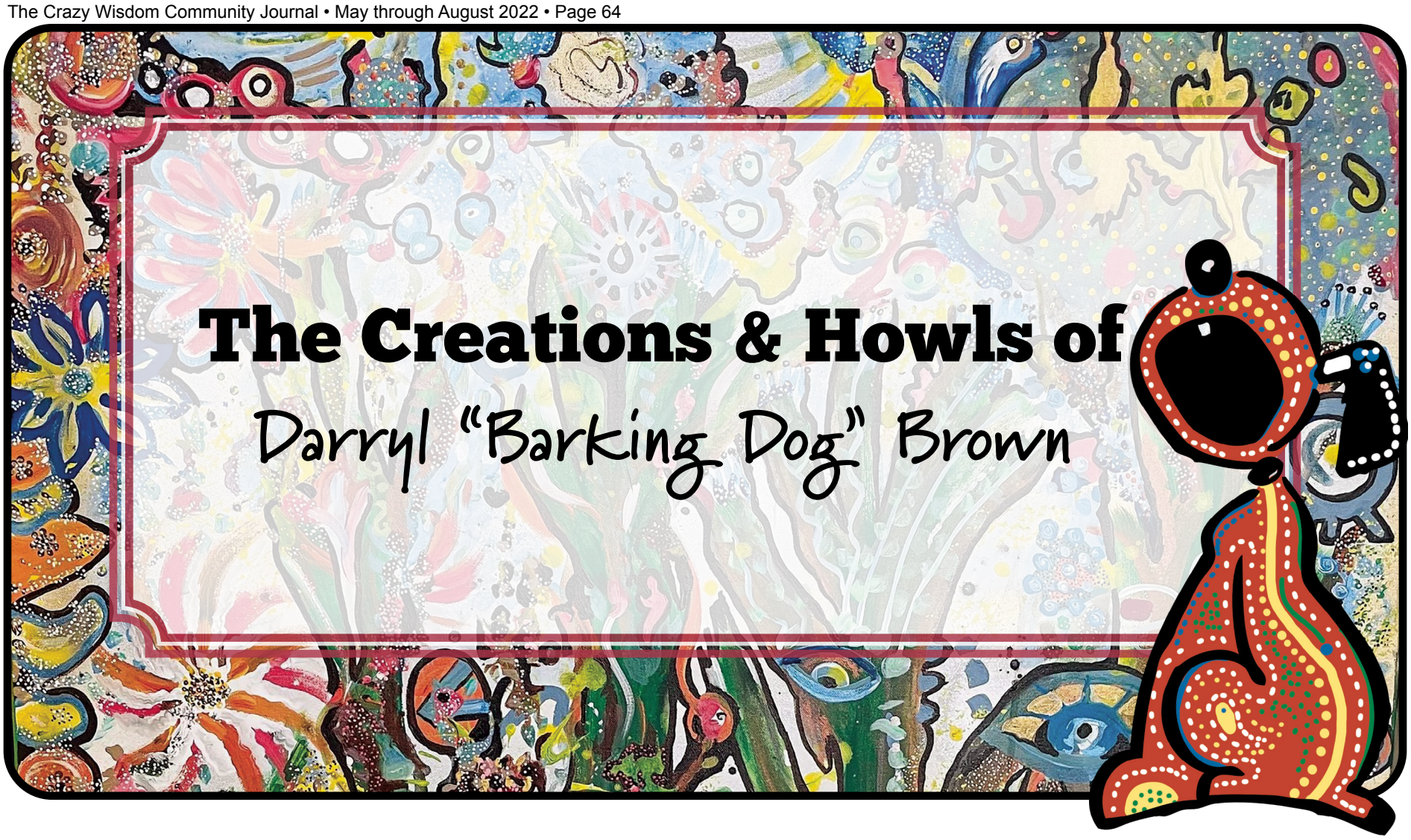
Local Author, Illustrator, and surface pattern designer who specializes in painting whimsical animals and nature friends.
Visit her online at:

FURANDFEATHERFRIENDS.COM

Or follow her on Instagram at:

MAGICKALJENNCARSON

Her books can be ordered online or anywhere books are sold!



The Creations & Howls of Darryl "Barking Dog" Brown

By Cashmere Morley

There is a frenetic energy. There is also a stillness. There is a shape propelling into infinity. There is a cluster of dots, bound so tightly together it makes a heart ache. Here, in this painting, the creative freedom of dreams is restricted only by canvas size. Darryl "Barking Dog" Brown paints to create works that "connect us to the spirit world, through which we may learn to live a more sustainable life on planet Earth."

The idea of working toward a more sustainable life is one of the cosmic tendrils in which Brown and a local kombucha tea company are tethered together.

"The first time I ever had kombucha, it tasted like buttermilk to me. The second time I had it, I was at a party," said Brown, "...where Rachel [Kanann, CEO of Unity Vibration in Ypsilanti] was serving something she had made. Rachel is quite the alchemist. She makes all her own recipes. Now I'm buying kombucha at the store every time I go! I never had a taste for it before."

The party Brown is talking about is *Entheofest*, an annual "free speech event celebrating sacred plant medicine" in Ann Arbor, in which he was a keynote speaker last year. After meeting Brown at *Entheofest*, Kanaan and part-owner of Unity Vibration, Cynthia Greene, knew that their gathering was kismet. ("He magically ended up in my backyard, that afternoon!" Green remembers. I'd never met him before that, and next thing, we were talking about sacred Native American prophecies and swapping information to start collaborating.") That introduction sparked an artistic partnership between the brewery and the artist.

Darryl Brown, his colonial name, is of American Indian descent. His spiritual name is *Medidegwe Anamosh*, literally translated as *The Sound That a Dog Makes*. He says his friends call him *Barking Dog*, but otherwise his spiritual name is reserved for ceremony and spiritual gatherings only.

Unity Vibration is a hidden delight in an unassuming location off Ecorse Road in Ypsilanti. The welcoming aroma of kombucha being brewed in the back of the warehouse bubbles up and greets guests upon entering. String lights and paintings from local artists line the metal walls. Up front is for drinks, eats, and meets. Further back, musicians play live music. Artists paint as one voice. Community is sown and grown. Unity Vibration captures the classic Ypsi juxtaposition of whacky-meets-cozy-hominess perfectly, while creating something entirely its own: a community cultivation spot where art and artists combine with a tea and brew house. Where else can you grab a glass of 'booch' while an indigenous shaman artist teaches painting?

The creative freedom of dreams is restricted only by canvas size.

Beyond that, what sets Unity Vibration apart lies in the technique.

"Unity has its own special unique process and intention within the brewing," said Kannan. "We use Hado positive messaging. We also use sacred sound vibrations and solfeggio frequencies [as we brew our products]."

In November 2021, Unity Vibration hosted a month-long art show featuring Brown's work. During that exhibition opening, Brown offered to host a community painting event, where a small gathering of people collaborated with Brown using acrylics and paint brushes on an oversized canvas.

"The public was invited to paint on a large canvas using a variety of colors, to help fill the canvas with their own individual expressions," said Brown. "The black and white paint along with the metallic colors are applied by me, so I can combine the community art creation into a single work of art. I have been doing this at various events for the last several years with great success. It's fun for everyone who participates."

The welcoming aroma of kombucha being brewed in the back of the warehouse bubbles up and greets guests upon entering. String lights and paintings from local artists line the metal walls.

This May, Unity Vibration has planned an unveiling event of the finished community painting.

"The unveiling is bringing the painting back, sort of like a before and after, to give to the Unity Vibration brewery to have for display," said Brown.

The coalition of Unity Vibration with Brown furthers the brewery's mission to offer "continuous support and recognition to the arts in our area," said Greene.

"We are providing free open venues to artists that inspire and help the evolution of consciousness and the planet," said Kanaan. "We are open to all that serve to bring people together. We love Darryl and his tribal wisdom and galactic mind and art."

Greene and Kanaan hope teaming with Brown will create the kind of groundwork for future events and opportunities for other local artists, whether that's an artist interested in painting, dancing, music, or other mediums.

"We will offer free community events such as a community painting before the day of the workshop," said Kannan, "...usually the admissions are for a full day, [including] materials. You leave with your own art and spiritual masterpiece." Kannan said the workshop runs about $300.

Community art, at its core, says Greene, is about unity in the community. Greene, like Brown, believes that art can heal, and that it can also bring about the self-awareness needed to connect to a deeper awareness of the world around.

"Beyond that, turning 60 years old last fall has sharpened my desire to plant seeds of wisdom and sustainability, to mature, after I am gone in body, as did those before me. I saw an opportunity [with Brown] to continue the Southeast Michigan/ Ann Arbor/Ypsi connection with our Indigenous Anishinaabe elders by promoting meditation painting and metaphysical teaching workshops by Brown." said Greene. No dates have been set as of yet, but Greene is looking forward to the future workshops and events the brewery hopes to host on the horizon.

"We enjoyed the offerings of kombucha tea and kombucha beer at the brewery that fabulous evening [at the last community painting]," she said, noting that she hopes to repeat that process during the May unveiling. "The community paintings are also a vehicle to connect interested parties for future metaphysical painting workshops and lectures of Native American teachings. We [at Unity Vibration] want to teach people how to live sustainably and in harmony with our grandmother Earth." Greene said.

The coalition of Unity Vibration with Brown furthers the brewery's mission to offer "continuous support and recognition to the arts in our area."

–Cynthia Greene

Put simply: Mother Earth is crying. Brown is howling back. Unity Vibration is the amplifier for that howl.

"The Earth is in great change and we are living in times of the Indigenous prophecy," said Brown. "We are at the cross-roads for the future. Do we choose the "death culture" of continuous war along with destruction of the Earth's environment? Or do we choose the path of the "life culture," of peace. Do we learn to live in balance and harmony with nature?" These are the questions Brown hopes to address in his works.

Brown is as layered as his paintings; indigenous artist, chief, shaman, and sun dancer, are just some of his many forms. A creative soul from the "moment he could hold a paint brush," Brown began painting as a small boy, growing up in Saint Ignace, Michigan. He is mostly self-taught, having painted on bark, boxes, sticks, and anything else he could get his hands on. He worked briefly with a mentor, but by age 19, Brown was already getting approached by the DIA to display some of his works.

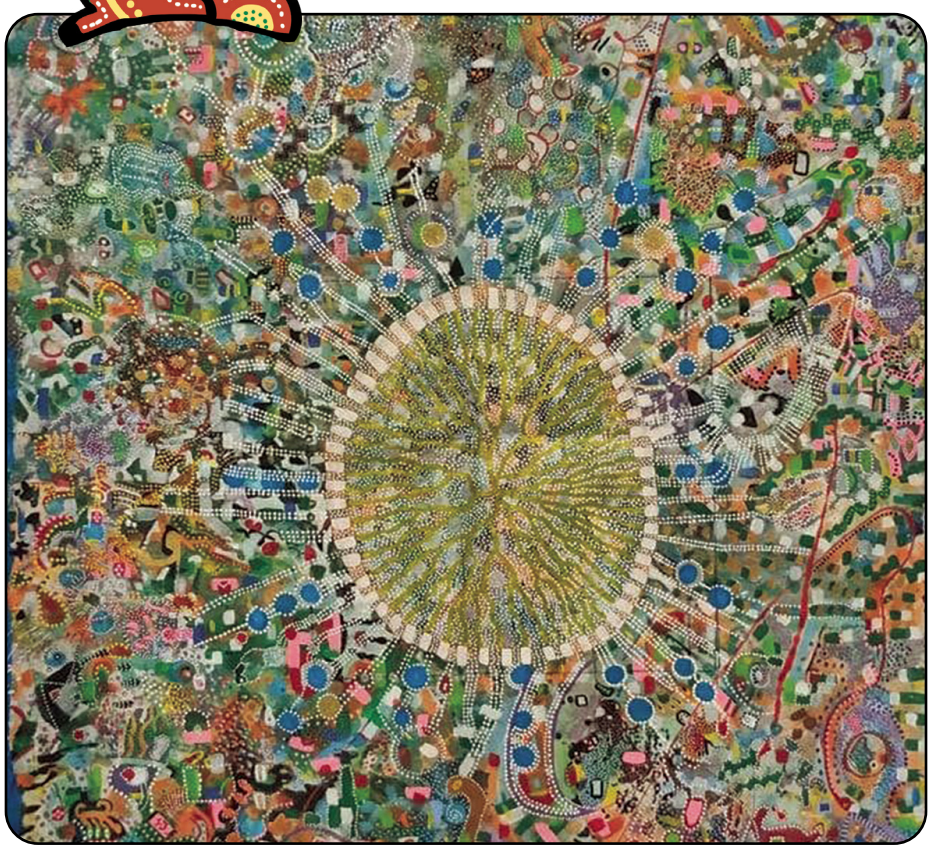
"I was young, and it came as a kind of validation," said Brown. "I was working on a wax sculpture at the time. [Being approached by the DIA] was like being discovered." Brown said. "I was also painting mural style on walls and whatever space was available to me. A board member of the DIA saw my work and connected me with the DIA [higher-ups]. They accepted my sculpture to be put on display along with photographs of my murals. However, just a few weeks before my exhibit was to be displayed, I declined their offer and sort of disappeared into obscurity." Until now.

Brown estimates he's made between 200-300 paintings in his life. He paints with brushes, but notes that he is always learning and adapting new techniques. For instance, Brown was stunned to learn, some decades into his career, that he could make tiny, perfect dots with the head of a toothpick.

"Work is done. And it's never done. There is always room for one more dot," Brown laughs, "... but you can also over-work a painting." It's finding the balance that's important.

"Barking Dog" Brown

continued...



Brown calls his distinctive painting style *atavistic surrealism: "Atavistic* is a term relating to something ancient or ancestral and a modification of a biological form where genetic traits reappear after having been dormant or lost through evolutionary change. It's also called *animistic* in the cultural adaptation. *Surrealism* is a way to animate the atavistic structure. Surrealism balances the rational creativity of life with that vision or power coming from the unconscious. Many surrealist artists have used automatic drawing to unlock ideas and images, as I do," said Brown.

Automatic drawing is the process of pure creation. Also called *surrealist automatism*, the artist "suppresses conscious control over the making process, allowing the unconscious mind to have great sway" during the artistic process, as explained by *Webster's Dictionary*.

When Brown begins to create, layers of base paint are guided by an all-trusting hand, which does not waver or think about destination, it only paints.

Living. It's the word Brown uses to solely summarize his work. It's also the feeling one might get after absorbing Brown's creations; it's as if the painting is breathing, the lines pulsing on the canvas. Brown assures it is only acrylic.

"Paint, especially acrylic paint, is easy to work with, it dries faster than oil, and with more precision than watercolor," he said. He also notes that it's a material many have also worked with before, in grade-school and beyond, so for that reason, acrylic makes for a good material to introduce during community works, since many are already familiar.

Community art, at its core, says Greene, is about unity in the community. Greene, like Brown, believes that art can heal, and that it can also bring about the self-awareness needed to connect to a deeper awareness of the world around.

"Creative people and other artists are often drawn to my work, as well as those who have a spiritual inclination," said Brown. "The younger generations are also very attracted to my painting style. Even before [collaborating with Unity Vibration], Ann Arbor has always been a favorite Michigan city for me. The people are progressive, open-minded, intellectually curious, and politically engaged," said Brown.

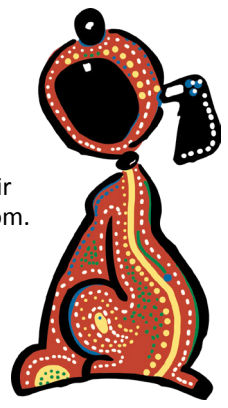
Kanaan, an artist in her own right, spoke briefly about studying anthroposophical (a study that "postulates the existence of an objective, intellectually comprehensible spiritual world, accessible to human experience", according to *Webster's Dictionary)* studies, and how it mirrored Brown's painting technique:

"I did something called veil painting, which isn't the same, but it's somewhat similar in the fact that the painting finds a spiritual life of its own, and there's so much in it to look at, and reflect on when you're finished. So that was amazing for me to see that same spirituality [in Brown's paintings] and to see he accomplishes a work like that in a completely different way than how I was taught. And not only does he bring that [spiritualism] out in himself through the work, but he brings it out so that people can learn to see it and trust themselves," said Kanaan.

"In painting, there's a lot of really beautiful things that come about that you don't really have control over. At the start of a work, you're not always painting with a specific focus or subject in mind, that's true, especially with veil painting or painting spiritually, as Darryl does, but you are painting with a feeling, or an intent. It's not so much like you're trying to paint an object… or maybe you're thinking about something specific. But when the painting dries, you will see the most amazing things come through the canvas, because there's an intent. You don't even have to consciously tap into it. It's just there. That's the kind of work Brown produces and inspires in others." Kanaan notes that painting for her is "another medium of communion with myself, [as well as] universal energy."

Brown encourages automatic creation as a release of self-actualization, as a surrender to a greater unknown. "It will happen," said Brown, "You'll see something.... you'll see a face, you'll see what looks like a rabbit or a snake or tree, this stuff is happening.... you're not painting it on the canvas. It's appearing. As a person develops the ability to relax and trust, the more that painting is going to come out. And you're going to be amazed because when you get all done, you'll realize it's like the painting sort of painted itself."

To see more of Darryl "Barking Dog" Brown's work, visit his Facebook @darrylbrownartist or his website darrylbrownart.org. Unity Vibration is located at 93 Ecorse Road in Ypsilanti. Visit their website for hours and information at unityvibrationkombucha.com.



Sponsored by Unity Vibration Kombucha

Darryl Barking Dog Brown

Artist | Activist | Healer | Teacher

Upcoming Events Series

Friday, May 6th 6:30pm
Unveiling of November Unity Vibrations community painting, another community painting, + art show @ Unity Vibrations' Brewery Tasting Room

Saturday, May 7th 10am-6pm
Meditation Painting Workshop @ Unity Vibrations. $165 per person. Some scholarships available—email thiagreene@aol.com. bit.ly/darrylart to register—space is limited. Bring your own lunch.

Sunday, May 8th 11am
Pipe Ceremony + Huron River Blessing + Q&A @ Riverside Park. Meet at the pavilion. Bring your own lunch.

At age nineteen, Darryl was given the name Medidegwe Anamosh, or Barking Dog, when he became a powerful voice for the American Indian Movement (AIM). Darryl led the 1994 Walk for Justice, a peaceful March from California to Washington DC initiated by First Nations Justice. Darryl is the former chairman of the Mackinac Band of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians (Anishinabe) as well as the coordinator of the annual Rendezvous at the Straits Powwow in St. Ignace, Michigan. Barking Dog is a spiritual leader in his community and an award-winning painter. In 2019, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed Darryl Brown to the board of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, where he is currently serving a 3-year term.

Purchase art and stay updated on community art workshops and public talks on Darryl's website

darrylbrownart.org darrylbrownart@gmail.com @darrylbrownart

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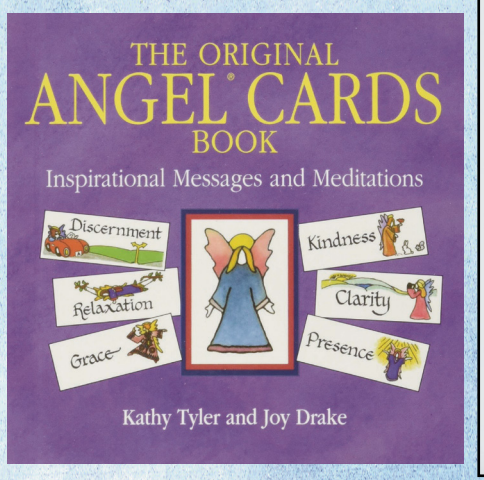

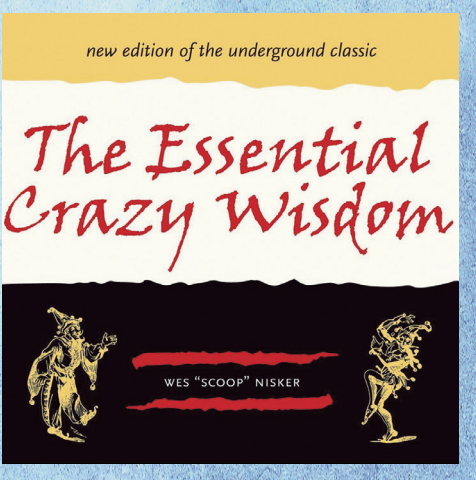

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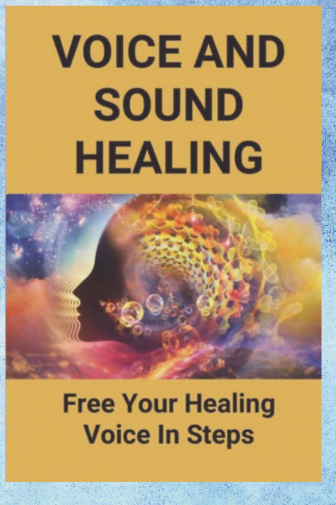

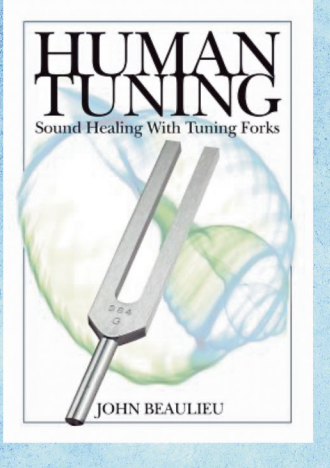

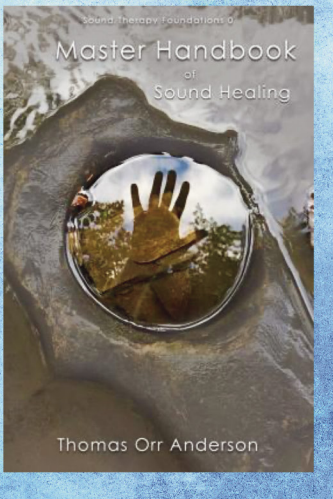

Special Section: Healing with Sound

Chris McCall

Healing with Sound

Chris McCall — Beyond the Voice Box

By Madonna Gauding
Photography by Hilary Nichols

Chris McCall was born and raised in Detroit. She grew up in a large, musical family where everyone sang at family events. Today, at 54, she is a professional singer, songwriter, voice coach, life coach, and meditation counselor. She still lives in the Detroit area, in a cheerful, green bungalow in Redford Township, with her three rescued cats, Monkey, Kosmo, and Eilley. Over decades, she has helped hundreds of students find, free, and use their voice in all its fullness and depth. Her unique approach goes beyond the voice box and focuses on the whole body. Through mediation and other techniques, she helps students release long held emotions that cause contractions in the body that restrict the voice. Her coaching is available to anyone who wants to open and relax their voice, for whatever reason: singing, acting, public speaking or personal development. A long-time practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, and Vipassana Meditation, she brings her deep Buddhist training to her voice work, life coaching, and meditation counseling. Her studio is on Main Street in downtown Ann Arbor.

Madonna Gauding: Tell me a little bit about yourself, your family and where you grew up.

Chris McCall: I was born and raised in Detroit and I'm number six out of seven kids. My parents were activists. They worked hard to get Coleman Young elected mayor and I remember him being at our house. My mom was a music teacher and Catholic Church choir director. My dad worked at Ford, but he started out in show business. He was an MC at a nightclub in Windsor called the Elmwood Casino, a place on the national night club circuit. They had the Rat Pack in there, and people like Sammy Davis Jr. He knew people like that well and he had this whole life in that world. But, when I came along, baby number six, he took a job at Ford Motor Company, hung up his tuxedo, and put on a security uniform. He worked at Ford for 35 years.

Madonna Gauding: Did he work in security for his entire career?

Chris McCall: He started in security and retired as a fire supervisor. My parents continued to be activists and were committed to the city of Detroit. And there was music. There were lots of musicians in my family. Music was our life. That's what our holidays were all about, usually revolving around the Church.

Madonna Gauding: You mean you sat around and sang in your family?

Chris McCall: We did, we actually did! (laughter) We sang when we washed the dishes, in harmony, I'm not kidding!

> When the whole extended family would get together, every one of us had their special song. At some point in the night somebody would start calling out each person to stand up and perform.
>
> — Chris McCall

MG: That sounds made up . . .

CM: It does! (laughter) When the whole extended family would get together, every one of us had their special song. At some point in the night somebody would start calling out each person to stand up and perform.

MG: Your family was so musical!

CM: I am really grateful for that. In my work, all the time, I hear people say they are afraid to sing, or they shouldn't, or someone told them they couldn't sing, and it upsets me. Shows like American Idol, or the Voice, promote the idea that only the very talented can or should sing. When I was growing up, everybody sang, and not everybody was headed for a professional career. My dad was a pro, so when he stood up it would be one thing, but there were lots of friends and family members who stood up to sing because they enjoyed singing. We loved every minute of it.

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>
> — Chris McCall

MG: Full disclosure: We've known each other for many decades. I've known you as a long-time meditator, Buddhist spiritual practitioner, as well as a wonderful singer, performer, and voice teacher. I am confessing now that I have always been intimidated by singing, and especially intimated by you and other people we know who can sing really well. It's very emotional for me to say that. So, I think I am definitely a candidate for your work. My voice is so constricted, and my range is so limited. Can you help somebody like me?

CM: Oh, I think so. Yes.

MG: Someone like me who feels she can't sing at all, who feels a tightness in her voice, even when talking?

CM: Well, there are a lot of things that can cause a tightness. When people feel they only have a few notes in their range, definitely part of that is physical, but when we go deeper, we find there is usually an emotional component creating that constriction. That contraction, we'll call it, is very common. People will say they have a five-note range. They will sing a song and when it goes above that five-note range they opt for a lower note. They learned to do this to avoid embarrassment or "standing out" and have done it their whole life. They think they are tone deaf and everybody around them thinks they are tone deaf, but it's really rare for someone to be tone-deaf. When I work with someone, it's a process. We have to trust each other. You have to trust that I am not going to attack you or criticize you, and that I am really supporting you. We have to get you comfortable—easing into that higher range, and as you go into that higher range, all kinds of emotions and issues can get triggered. It is a terribly vulnerable thing to do, to sing in front of someone. It takes a lot of courage for someone who struggles with their voice. Sometimes we just sit and feel the contraction without making a sound, holding it in our awareness without trying to eradicate or "fix it" but observing through the lens of the heart, with a friendly curiosity.

When people feel they only have a few notes in their range, definitely part of that is physical, but when we go deeper, we find there is usually an emotional component creating that constriction.

— Chris McCall

MG: I have a lot of emotion around this topic. In preparation for talking to you today, I read an article you posted on your website SingAnnArbor.com. I learned that as a voice teacher you work with a person's body and with their entire range of emotions. I thought voice training was a physical thing and had to do with training the vocal cords, the breath, the diaphragm, but what you are doing goes way beyond that. It goes very deep and has the potential to transform a person's life.

CM: A few months after I started teaching private lessons, I realized I had to keep a box of tissues in my studio. We would start working and right away people would start crying. When I thought about it, and because of the person I am, it was like, "Yes, of course you are going to cry." But as a voice teacher I had to ask myself, "Is it okay to follow where this is taking me? Is it okay for me to talk about this person's emotions, to create a space for this? Am I qualified to do this?" Eventually, I stopped questioning and I allowed my teaching process to unfold naturally based on what my students needed. In the beginning, I had some students, really kind students, who sensed that I wasn't quite sure if I should comment on things, who said "It's okay, you can go ahead and tell me." I remember this one young adult I was working with years ago gave me permission to do that.

A few months after I started teaching private lessons, I realized I had to keep a box of tissues in my studio. We would start working and right away people would start crying. When I thought about it, and because of the person I am, it was like, "Yes, of course you are going to cry." But as a voice teacher I had to ask myself, "Is it okay to follow where this is taking me? Is it okay for me to talk about this person's emotions, to create a space for this? Am I qualified to do this?"

MG: Can you tell me how your process works now?

CM: Part of what I use is called the Realization Process, which is something Judith Blackstone teaches. It is an embodiment practice, a process of inhabiting the body and attuning to the space inside the body. To attune to the space inside the body is also to attune to the space outside the body, which imparts a feeling of unity. She is also a psychotherapist, so she teaches a process of attuning to the psychology, or the mind that was in play at the time you developed a contraction in your body. So, let's say you're feeling tightness in your throat. There is a process in which you attune to that contraction or lump in your throat or maybe a pulling sensation in your stomach, or a holding in your shoulder. In this process of attunement and being present, you might become aware of a quality of mind, an emotion. It may be a quality of mind from when you were five years old, or twelve, or whatever it might be. You may explore certain events at that time, or maybe a feeling you had at that age, or your relationship with your parents. Through visualization and other methods, I help you to become more versed in the language of that contraction.

MG: So, the contraction is embedded in my body. Its origin is from a particular event or time in my life and you help me learn to talk about it, feel it, describe it, and understand it.

CM: And to feel the movement of the contraction. For example, if someone was criticized a great deal, they may feel a lot of contraction in their solar plexus, a kind of bracing for something to come. They may find any kind of stimulation might create that kind of contraction. Over time the contraction can move and maybe they develop some tension in their spine around the vertebrae right behind their solar plexus. It's very mechanical as well. It's not imperative to identify an event or situation that triggered the contraction but with presence and practice, the emotional content reveals itself to you without any effort.

MG: Because of an event or experience in your past, a contraction is expressed mechanically in the body, in the bones, the organs, the facia?

CM: That's right. There are layers upon layers of—and I hesitate to call them stories, but I want to call them stories with golden lettering—because I don't think they are something to be dismissed. In Vipassana meditation practice, we do not look into our stories, we just try to be present with our experience. Sometimes that is a good place for me to go, but in this case, when dealing with contraction in the body, I feel like the stories really need to be honored and met with gentleness.

MG: It seems Realization Process is doing something different than Vipassana.

CM: Judith Blackstone has talked about how in certain meditation practices stories are considered negative. That was interesting for me because I started Realization Process first and then went to Vipassana. In Vipassana, I can see also how helpful it is to let the stories drop, because they can just be a mental exercise, a kind of grasping. If you are doing Vipassana practice and you are in your head having this mental exercise, that's one thing, but if you are inhabiting your body and encountering unconscious material which is having an effect on your physical body and your physical being, that is something else and it might require a different approach.

MG: And that unconscious material has an effect on my voice, and if my voice is constricted, it involves my whole body.

CM: Yes, that's right. The contraction is not just here (pointing to her throat). Understanding this helped me surrender to being a teacher who does not just work on the voice box alone.

In Vipassana meditation practice, we do not look into our stories, we just try to be present with our experience. Sometimes that is a good place for me to go, but in this case, when dealing with contraction in the body, I feel like the stories really need to be honored and met with gentleness.

MG: I was looking at your website and the services you offer, and you mention coaching. Do you do life coaching in addition to working with the voice?

CM: Yes. I wasn't sure what to call it. For lack of a better term, I call it life coaching or sometimes I call it meditation coaching. In my working with voice students, we would sometimes morph into this kind of work. With some people this is all I do. We meet online and it's similar to a therapy session for 15, 20 minutes or a half hour, then I'll do a guided meditation for a half hour or forty-five minutes, using the Realization process or Vipassana practice. Or sometimes it's just a matter of being present with someone while they are feeling their feelings. That doesn't sound like we're doing much, but we are doing an awful lot.

Continued on next page

Healing with Sound

Chris McCall — Beyond the Voice Box

Continued from previous page

MG: I understand what you are saying. In my own life, it has been very powerful for me to have someone witness what I am going through and provide a safe container for me to explore my feelings.

CM: It's so very difficult for people to just feel their feelings. We wonder why a beautiful talented singer has imposter complex and can't bring himself or herself to take the next step in their career. It takes so much courage to really stop and decide to just feel. And if we do pause to feel, the first thing we want to do is to fix it, or make it go away. Mostly, we don't want to feel. We will use anything we can to distract ourselves from feeling, including spirituality and psychology, so good luck to us!

MG: In your article, it was a revelation to me when you talked about befriending my feelings, to befriend my anger, befriend my fear. I tried that and it felt really good. I offered myself acceptance and I felt so much better with whatever I was dealing with at the time.

CM: When you are talking about befriending your fear or befriending your anger, in many spiritual communities, fear and anger are considered the worst emotions you can feel, along with attachment. If we do something out of fear or anger, we are supposed to feel shame—not technically, but many of us feel like we are off track spiritually when we are feeling these heavy emotions. That causes shame and judgement which creates more polarity. It's a real problem for those of us trying to work on ourselves.

MG: I forgot who came up with the term "spiritual bypassing," but it sounds like what you are talking about. In some spiritual communities you are encouraged to transcend or excise negative emotions, get beyond them, and by doing that you never really understand or deal with them on a deep level. We are encouraged to eradicate negativities which is a kind of violence toward the self. I think you find this in any organized religion. In your work, you allow room for people to feel what they are feeling, to accept and befriend those feelings, and understand how they manifest in the body and specifically in their voice.

CM: I remember telling my friend Kathleen that I kept using the word "love," and I was asking myself if it is okay for me to use the word love when I am teaching people. I worried that love is not professional, (laughter) and that I shouldn't use that word. But I do use the word love in my work, although in the beginning "kindness" works better for some people.

Mostly, we don't want to feel. We will use anything we can to distract ourselves from feeling, including spirituality and psychology, so good luck to us!

MG: So how does love manifest in your teaching?

CM: When people are starting out, they will be very nervous about singing in front of me. So, they will go through a lot of machinations before they can bring themselves to sing just a little bit. They want me to know they already know that they are not very good, and that they had a cold last week, and they don't even know why they decided to do this, that it is stupid for them to even try. So, I suggest to them that their desire to sing is a natural part of being a human being. That even babies sing. But something happens along the way that causes this contracted throat and the idea that "I can't do this." I tell them I've seen this in other people and that I respect that deep desire to want to open up your throat and let your voice out and feel free. That some part of them must feel that way, too. And maybe we could offer some love to this contracted energy and this part of you that feels you aren't good enough to do this just here in front of me right now. And maybe if we loved that energy a little bit it will relax. We might feel into that, so if someone is open to that, I might suggest we just feel into the throat, and have the person put their hands on their throat where they feel tightness. Maybe it feels like it is right around the trachea, a tenderness in the muscles there, and maybe a tightness in the shoulders creating this kind of girdling energy. We can sit and feel that for a few minutes with love. I always start with love. In my experience, when you bring awareness into the body, and love isn't present, the body is going to shut down. It's not going to work. Mary Oliver calls it the "soft animal of your body." That's how we approach this interior work, the way we would approach a soft animal, with tenderness. Sometimes people don't know what love feels like.

MG: If you are doing some kind of relaxation exercise in a group and someone says bring your awareness to your hand, and now to your arm, and so on, are you are saying if you don't do this with a conscious feeling of love toward yourself than it doesn't do much of anything?

CM: That's my experience. If we don't have love as the motivation, or the impulse to integrate and love this contracted energy we are feeling, whatever it may be, then usually we are bringing a mental energy, a desire to change whatever we are experiencing, to subtly to push it away. And underneath there may be fear. If fear is there, then there's going to be this desire to control what we find inside. What I am talking about is my personal path. I found I couldn't get anywhere with anything in my life without loving myself and making love my path. Nothing worked until I committed to that. I felt like I would put on spiritual costumes. "Okay, I'm going to be this kind of meditator or that kind of meditator." With my spiritual costume on I would say "I'm going to meditate, I am going to eat right, and I am going to do all these things for all the right reasons." But what was really going on was I was rejecting myself and I was anorexic. I told myself that this was my spiritual path, my spiritual practice, but there was no love for this person. No real warmth for her and her struggle. I think many of us reject ourselves in similar ways. So, if someone is feeling this constriction and they can trust me a little bit to witness and they decide to look inward and feel it, and they think someone is there rooting for them on the side of love, then things start to happen.

MG: Does the voice then begin to open?

CM: Yes, it does. There can be some very quick results, but usually it takes time and practice. The mechanics of all of this constricted energy causes constriction deep, deep inside. It's a process of releasing and letting go. And there are vocal exercises. We have to expand what we do with the voice. And each step along that path can bring another kind of triggering. I may tell a student "We're going to try to sing a little higher today than you thought you could." Or I ask them to sing "Aw." Important to all vocal lessons is being able to sing "Aw" because it's the most open sound. If we sing "Aw" and we travel up our range, and we are not trained, most of us will reach a point where we make a sound we don't like. We're going to have to make this adjustment and we won't like how it sounds. Then we have to decide, to once again, love ourselves, and accept this person who is not able to do this today, who makes this sound that we don't like and just be present with her.

And underneath there may be fear. If fear is there, then there's going to be this desire to control what we find inside.

MG: What are your plans for the future?

CM: My goal is to continue to help people as much as possible in whatever way I can. I had somebody come in recently, a mature vocalist, a woman in her late 50s, who came to music lessons within the last ten years and who really committed herself to them. She is a great student who has really excelled in her guitar playing and her singing. She came in and started singing "Imagine" by John Lennon. And as soon as she started singing, I could feel the emotion behind it. It's very common for me to cry when I hear my students sing. Crying is also something that I thought was unprofessional, but that's how I am. I've accepted it. So, I closed my eyes and started to listen to her, but she had to stop because she was crying. We had a little conversation, and then she went back and sang through the whole song. It felt like that was the whole session, both of us crying about this song and what it means for the world. When a student captures that emotional content, that emotional gift in a song, I feel I'm in the presence of an artist. And that is amazing to me. You don't have to have a perfect voice to touch a heart.

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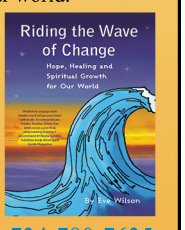

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Healing with Sound

The Science of Sound Therapy

By Catherine Carr

I am lying on the floor of a friend's apartment as she sets up her singing bowls. The bowls—made variously of metal and crystal, ranging in size from soup bowls to witches' cauldrons—emit specific frequencies of sound when vibrated. I close my eyes. Daniella begins to play. In my mind's eye, I see the sounds as colors—slow circles of ink spreading out around and through me from where each bowl plays. I am immersed in sound and color.

In my mind's eye, I see the sounds as colors—slow circles of ink spreading out around and through me from where each bowl plays. I am immersed in sound and color.

There is nothing quite like the sound that's produced by singing bowls. There is a warmth and depth to it that an electronic speaker cannot replicate; the speaker lacks the physical properties which allow the bowls to vibrate just so. It swells smoothly from the faintest whisper into a sound that is itself almost an object, an energy field that vibrates through your body like a cellular massage.

The use of brass bells to produce deep, resonating notes of sound appears to date back 3,500 years in the Himalayas. Anyone who has heard a Chinese brass bell or gong rung knows that these sounds have a similar quality: slow and deep, growing, then fading so gradually as to overwhelm the mind and focus its attention. For this reason, they are often used in meditation services and rituals. The sound overwhelms the senses at its peak, then fades gradually to draw attention toward silence.

The use of singing bowls—bowls which produce sounds of similar quality by being rubbed rather than struck, allowing the sound to be sustained and its volume finely controlled—appears more recent. Records dating back millennia reference the use of gongs and bells in ritual and healing, but the bowls seem to have appeared sometime in the 20th century.

The people of the Himalayas are not the only ancient pioneers to believe that sound could have divine healing properties. The belief that certain frequencies of sound had creative properties is found in Sanskrit thought, where it is related to the use of mantras to promote certain types of spiritual and physical healing and development. The Greek philosopher, Pythagoras (yes, of Pythagorean theorem fame), coined the term "music of the spheres" to describe sounds that he believed were produced by the heavenly spheres which were thought to carry planets in orbit around the Earth. He believed that this music could influence the human soul.

In my mind's eye, I see the sounds as colors—slow circles of ink spreading out around and through me from where each bowl plays. I am immersed in sound and color.

Today, we know that this is not entirely without truth: different frequencies, harmonies, and rhythms of sound can affect our brain activity. While the planets don't emit any music that we can hear, use of sound by skilled musicians can produce desired emotional and mental states which may even have an impact on our physical health.

Like so many sound therapists and other alternative therapists, Meyer-Kukan found himself caught in a tug-of-war between unscientific claims made by questionable "experts," and scientifically validated findings showing that his art could improve well-being and be useful as part of a healing regimen.

Rob Meyer-Kukan

Jenn Scott Perfect Harmony Images

"Sound therapy" can refer to many practices including the use of singing bowls and ancient, traditional instruments, the use of recorded nature sounds and the use of specially formulated music therapy. All of these modalities *do* appear to produce benefits to mood, mental function, and sense of well-being. But how much truth is there to claims that sound therapy works because sounds affect the shape of water or because the human body has an "ideal healthy frequency?"

"Sound therapy" can refer to many practices including the use of singing bowls and ancient, traditional instruments, the use of recorded nature sounds and the use of specially formulated music therapy.

For this article, I set out to find out. I went for assistance to Rob Meyer-Kukan, a church musician-turned-sound therapist who now runs 7 Notes Natural Health in the Ann Arbor area.

Meyer-Kukan had always known he loved the sounds produced by bells, perhaps not unlike those produced by the first bells and gongs of ancient China. When an injury limited his ability to continue working as a church musician, his friends recommended that he explore sound therapy with Himalayan singing bowls.

"At first I said, 'that's a bunch of hooey,'" Meyer-Kukan tells me in our interview. But his curiosity got the better of him, and he signed up for singing bowl training. "The first time I held a Himalayan singing bowl, I knew there was something here. And I needed to share it with people."

Like so many sound therapists and other alternative therapists, Meyer-Kukan found himself caught in a tug-of-war between unscientific claims made by questionable "experts," and scientifically validated findings showing that his art could improve well-being and be useful as part of a healing regimen. While some prominent "experts" made claims the scientific community rejected due to poor methodology, clinical trials turned up real benefits from sound therapy.

"We try not to say that we 'treat' anything," Meyer-Kukan tells me. "Sound therapy is not a substitute for traditional medicine. But it can be very restorative. The best thing a patient can say to me is 'I feel like I just took a thousand naps.'"

Meyer-Kukan's caution in making healing claims is understandable. Some subscribers to the philosophy of sound therapy have been known to claim to "cure" serious illnesses. While it is possible that sound therapy may strengthen patients' immune and healing responses in some cases, there's no evidence to suggest it's a good idea to rely on sound therapy alone to treat anything.

Rob Meyer-Kukan, LMT

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Dr. Masaru Emoto has become famous in some metaphysical circles for claiming to have proven that certain wavelengths of light and sound, as well as certain thoughts and emotions, can change the nature of water and cause it to form different crystal structures. His belief in an inherent link between the effects of physical vibrations on water and the emotions and thoughts of people have been cited by some in the sound therapy community to explain the success of their techniques.

Unfortunately, Emoto's research has not met the standards the medical and scientific communities generally require of their members. He has not reported the details of the methods he has used to obtain his results, meaning that his samples may have been influenced by variables outside those he is studying. Emoto has so far declined to reproduce his results under the rigorously controlled experimental conditions used by peer-reviewed medical researchers, despite being offered a $1 million prize to prove his claims up to the standards generally accepted by the medical community by James Randi, founder of the One Million Dollar Paranormal Challenge.

Emoto's research has also inspired engineers to prove that sound vibrations *do* affect the activity of water molecules. While it has been proven that sound vibrations have physical effects on water molecules, these have not been proven to have health benefits, and are unlikely to be the source of benefit from sound therapy. As we will see, there are more well-established and proven mechanisms by which binaural and relaxing sounds may affect mood, and even the body's immune and healing functions.

While it has been proven that sound vibrations have physical effects on water molecules, these have not been proven to have health benefits, and are unlikely to be the source of benefit from sound therapy.

What sound *can* definitely do is change brain activity. And this is more important than many people may realize. Changed brain activity may have profound effects on the body. This is the basis for Meyer-Kukan's favorite techniques to use at Seven Notes.

"When looking for a sound therapist," Meyer-Kukan advises me, "ask someone about their instruments. Different instruments do different things. Singing bowls are my favorite, personally. They have a very gentle and relaxing quality. Other instruments have a more thrilling, exciting effect. What you do in sound therapy will depend on the goal you want to achieve."

"Also look for someone who has knowledge of binaural beats," Meyer-Kukan continues. "The idea is that two different frequencies can work together to produce specific patterns of activity in the brain." According to this theory, patterns of brain activity produced can range from the types of slow, restorative Delta waves found in deep sleep to the fast, high-frequency Gamma brain activity associated with bolts of insight and states of inspiration.

Scientific studies have been inconclusive in their findings as to whether sound therapy techniques reliably produce the brainwave patterns to which their effects on mood and well-being are attributed. But studies *have* found consistent benefits to patient well-being from several types of sound therapy, including singing bowl therapy, the use of healing mantras, and the use of recorded relaxing sounds, such as nature sounds. People with anxiety have consistently reported improvement in anxious thoughts and feelings after sound therapy. One study published in the *Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine* found that 62 participants felt significant improvements in their senses of spiritual well-being, with decreases in anger, depressed mood, fatigue, and tension after a Tibetan singing bowl session.

The tension-relieving effects appeared strongest for those who had not experienced Tibetan singing bowl meditation before. The authors proposed that singing bowls could be an effective low-cost intervention to relieve tension, anxiety, and depression, and improve spiritual well-being.

A study of 47 breast cancer patients published in the journal of *Psycho-Oncology* in 2013 tested the effects of a Tibetan Sound Meditation program featuring healing mantras and audio CDs of traditional Himalayan healing sounds. The study found that patients suffering from "brain fog" associated with their illness and the effects of chemotherapy experienced improvements in self-reported mental health, and spirituality while participating in the sound meditation program.

Some patients also scored higher on tests of learning and memory, cognitive processing speed, and cognitive abilities after treatment. Study authors cautioned that these improvements had disappeared one month after the Sound Meditation program ended, but that the program did appear to improve patients' quality of life during the study.

A clinical trial published in the *International Journal of Nursing Studies* in 2014 sought to determine whether the use of sounds from nature could improve clinical outcomes in 120 heart surgery patients undergoing the stressful process of being

Continued on next page

Healing with Sound

The Science of Sound Therapy

Continued from previous page

weaned off ventilators. In this patient group, stress could actually prove deadly: the elevated blood pressure and heart rates caused by anxiety could cause potentially life-threatening complications for hearts and coronary arteries recovering from surgery.

The study found that the use of headphones playing nature-based sounds significantly reduced levels of anxiety and agitation in these patients. Significant differences were also found in blood flow as a result, potentially reducing the likelihood of complications in the nature sound treatment group.

The study authors recommended that critical care nurses could use such recorded sounds to improve patients' experience of stressful procedures, and that more studies should be conducted to determine if this technique could be used to reduce risk of complications across different patient demographic groups.

Even more intriguing, at least one study has found decreases in stress hormone levels following sound therapy with several types of traditional and meditation music. This finding is not at all surprising, since anything which produces a relaxed and restorative mental state has been found to lower levels of stress hormones. However, confirming this finding is important because stress hormones play a big role in medical outcomes.

Even more intriguing, at least one study has found decreases in stress hormone levels following sound therapy with several types of traditional and meditation music.

Well-intended hormones, such as cortisol, are made to help us fight acute threats. To do this, they raise our blood pressure and blood sugar while suppressing our immune systems and healing functions. This is great for an actual fight-or-flight situation when our cells need the extra oxygen and sugar supplied by our blood to fight for our lives. But when the source of our stress is a work email or a medical procedure, obviously suppressing our immune and healing functions is not so great.

The effect of relaxation and improved sense of well-being on stress hormones is thought to be one cause of the occasional "miraculous" recoveries reported by those who undergo holistic medicine retreats and find that their medical situations soon begin to improve.

While relaxation alone has not been proven to rival modern medicine in curing any disease or injury, adding relaxation therapies to modern medical treatment has been shown to improve outcomes in many conditions. This may occur through the pathway of decreasing stress hormone levels allowing for increased immune system and healing activity.

Jenn Scott Perfect Harmony Images

Rob Meyer-Kukan

A study undertaken by medical staff and music students at the University of Tokyo measured stress hormone levels in ten participants before and after a music therapy session. The scientists tested several different types of music, including music with traditional Japanese instruments, Gregorian chant, music utilizing traditional African rhythms, and music using harmonics which were designed to invoke images of natural beauty.

Researchers found that levels of the stress hormones norepinephrine and corticotropin, and cortisol in participants' blood had decreased significantly after the music therapy sessions. Though no specific differences were reported between the different types of music, these results suggest that further study of the effects of different types of music and sound therapy on stress hormones is warranted.

Still, relaxing sounds can't fix everything. A different clinical trial published in the *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* in 2009 found that the use of recorded relaxation sounds supplied by a company called MusiCure made patients and healthcare staff alike *feel* more relaxed during coronary angiography procedures but did not improve the medical outcomes of the procedures.

So, what exactly can sound therapy do? It can feel restorative. It can produce feelings of relaxation and enhanced well-being. These benefits may in turn lower levels of stress hormones and free our bodies' natural healing mechanisms to do their work.

These results mesh well with Meyer-Kukan's philosophy of sound therapy.

"*I* don't do the healing," he told me in our interview. "I do therapeutic work to help the body heal itself." This is a startling literal description of what happens when stress hormones are downregulated: the body's own immune and healing functions receive the message that they are liberated from immediate danger. They are then free to do their work.

While our instincts can sometimes lead to incorrect conclusions—sound therapy probably cannot cure any illness through its effect on water molecules, for example—what feels right to us often does prove helpful, even if medical science doesn't immediately know how to explain these benefits.

Sound healing is an excellent case study for the interplay of instinct and medical science which pervades the study of wellness. While our instincts can sometimes lead to incorrect conclusions—sound therapy probably cannot cure any illness through its effect on water molecules, for example—what feels right to us often *does* prove helpful, even if medical science doesn't immediately know how to explain these benefits.

When we combine our instincts about how to optimize our well-being with the medical advice supported by the best experimental evidence, then we get the best results.

The first time Rob Meyer-Kukan held a singing bowl in his hands, he knew that something important was happening. His experience mirrors those of so many other sound therapy patients and practitioners: they may not be able to explain *how* the sounds they are experiencing can have therapeutic properties, but they know that they *do*. As medical science marches on, it tells us more about the brain-body relationship, and how these therapies that we instinctively know benefit us can be used to the benefit of modern medicine.

Rob Meyer-Kukan can be reached through his sound therapy practice, 7 Notes Natural Health. Find him online at 7notesnaturalhealth.com or contact him by email at contact@7notesnaturalhealth.com or by phone at 248-962-5475. The 7 Notes Natural Health office is located at 3830 Packard Street Suite 120 in Ann Arbor, MI.

Catherine Carr is a former clinical research coordinator, current freelance writer, and community minister in training with Cherry Hill Seminary. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Neuroscience from the University of Michigan in 2011. She can be reached at clkagmi@gmail.com.

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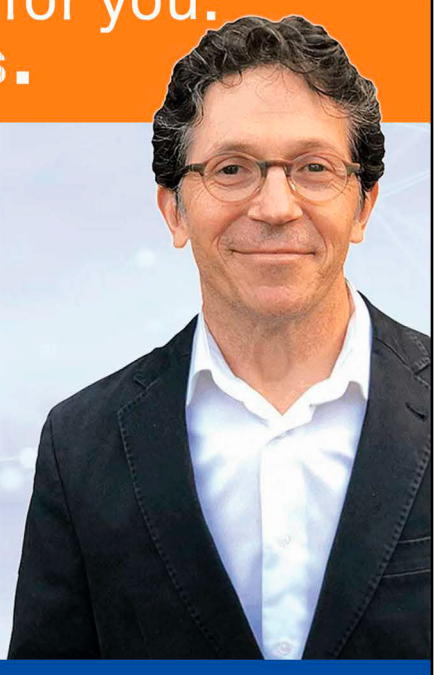

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Healing with Sound

The Sound of Healing with Kimberly Joy Rieli

By Michelle McLemore
Photos by Jessica Smith

When you first see Kimberly Joy Rieli, you may be smitten with her fairy queen appearance. The long flowing hair, her lithe frame, and doe-eyes only add to the emanating aura of kindness and peace. Yet to limit your understanding to just the visual sense would sorely miss the depth of her very real healing gifts.

As a singer, musician, vocal empowerment coach, and holistic sound healer, Rieli has helped clients in over 15 countries. She cultivates vocal, breathing, and mental techniques to discover and empower their authentic voice. Vocal clients range from those who use their voices professionally, like speakers, teachers, and salespeople, to those who are in the music industry, as well as for those who struggle with anxiety or confidence at a personal level. However, in regard to her sound healing, clients with physical, mental, and emotional dis-ease also find relief.

Despite Rieli's vast musical experiences, she has faced ongoing anxiety since middle school.

Rieli has been recognized five times as the Winner of Best Performance Arts Business and also earned Best Voice Lessons in Santa Monica, CA by an independent company. She was also featured in *Yoga Journal*.

Growing up in Wyoming, Reili was surrounded by a musical family. She earned a BA in Music at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts and went on to Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver where she earned a MA in Vocal Performance. Additional studies led her to work with singer and vocal technician Phyllis Curtin along with William Hanrahan, Per Bristow, and Melissa Cross. She gained experience at the Wesley Balk Opera/Music Theater Institute, Tanglewood music festival, and Spoleto, Italy Vocal Arts Symposium. She performed in orchestral ensembles and in title roles in various opera and musical theater productions. Her diverse music interests led her to even co-found a Renaissance ensemble performing Josquin music .

I knew music was healing but had never been exposed to how healing it could be.

Despite Rieli's vast musical experiences, she has faced ongoing anxiety since middle school. As she aged, the anxiety worsened and led to additional health problems and near crippling performance anxiety as a young adult. "The health problems and past traumas were straining both my inner and outer voice, robbing me of joy," Rieli explained. "As a result, I was launched into an extended existential crisis."

Rieli continued, "All of this led me on a mission to heal myself through the deep exploration of sound, holistic health, mindfulness, and spirituality. And as I healed, I was called to help others do the same. Because of my experiences, I also have a particular passion for helping women heal and reclaim their voices from trauma."

While in California seeking holistic ways to heal, she chanced upon an insightful teacher—"A Zen Buddhist voice teacher—at least that's how it felt. He wasn't Buddhist but his approach felt Buddhist in nature. It started me on the path of feeling into my body. I knew music was healing but had never been exposed to how healing it could be. So, I started that path."

As Rieli explored sound as a healing agent for herself, her findings rolled over into the vocal classes she began teaching around age 27. Workshops led to one-on-one clients. "People were drawn to me because I used a different, holistic approach to sound rather than simply the traditional scales, songs, and technical coaching I had learned through my collegiate training. Singing is much more than that and our voices are so much more!" Rieli's voice rang with passion. "It [traditional teaching methods] leaves out the soul and physiological part. Using only the formal teaching method often produces anxiety in new-to-music students. They feel they cannot live up to the classic expectation."

The Western approach to singing is to sing to impress versus sing to express or to experience – that is the difference.

"The Western approach to singing is to sing to *impress* versus sing to *express* or to *experience*—that is the difference." [That is a big difference.] "When we experience and express, it takes the focus off of sounding and looking good. It allows the

nervous system to calm down. When we focus on singing to *impress* it often activates the fight or flight nervous system response which is not good for singing."

In addition to the voice, Rieli has other sound tools that may be used. She plays the harp, a medicine drum, the piano, and Tibetan singing bowls among others.

Rieli's personal healing journey led to opening up and trusting her inner voice which allowed healing of her outer voice. This led to learning how to tone the vagus nerve which creates a peaceful, better quality of life and ability to breathe deeper. She explained, "Similar to eastern practices, where we put our intention and attention makes a world of difference internally and externally."

Around 2017, Rieli completed Usui Reiki levels 1 & 2 with Austeen Freeman, owner of Free to Be Yoga and Massage in Adrian, MI. "I feel when I'm working with people, there is an energetic attunement happening. It is part of the work even if it is not spoken. I also will do a hands-on Reiki attunement in combination with sound healing. It feels like I'm doing Reiki through sound—though I was never "taught" that in a formal sense."

Rieli also studied yoga since she was 20 years old and completed her yoga teacher training in 2019-2020 at One Tribe Yoga in Brooklyn, MI. "Yoga helps us to access our breath. Movement is also a huge part of our own vocal exploration. I work with clients on it quite a bit. A common issue for the modern person is hunched posture. [Modern] society hasn't placed much emphasis on how to use the body well which creates trends of shallow breath and anxieties that affect our ability to make sound. We are subtly taught to use our body as armoring, afraid to make sound, because its suggested there are only certain ways you can 'sound good.'"

In Rieli's business, Singing for Your Soul, she offers her clients multiple ways to interact, begin healing, and nurture their own authentic voice. She shared, "Through my own vocal empowerment journey and many years of teaching voice to others, I've seen time and again that our voices are powerful sources for healing our pain, transforming our lives, and experiencing true joy. I've seen that reclaiming our voices is not only healing – it's essential for our own well-being and the future of our planet."

For someone not familiar with a sound healing session, Rieli explained, "it's important to note that sessions never look the same. There is always a different combination for what an individual client resonates with. If someone has an interest in spirituality, then that opens certain doors. Or do they want to open up their creativity? If they have anxiety and they are open to mantras, I might recommend ones that I have personal experience with and know their effectiveness."

And in addition to the voice, she has other sound tools that may be used. Rieli plays the harp, a medicine drum, the piano, and Tibetan singing bowls among others. However, she also occasionally uses tuning forks, wind chimes, or any number of instruments that produce the desired frequency needed to interrupt energy blocks or guide energy within the body.

The impact of sound healing goes further than the client simply feeling relief from pain or tension.

"Just as there are different ways to prepare the body for a massage, with sound healing you don't just go in right away deep. I warm up the muscles with gentle sound movement. The harp, crystal bowls, and gentle singing are all ways to open up a more meditative healing state," Rieli informed. "When I'm preparing the body it's like a shamanic journey which drumming evokes."

During a session, "spiraling sound in and out of the body with focused intention on location occurs. Sound waves penetrate the tissue, some sounds more deeply. I do not consciously make the sounds I make during deep healing. It is very guided. Learning this came from a deep spiritual path of discovery."

The impact of sound healing goes further than the client simply feeling relief from pain or tension. The day following a particular healing, one of Rieli's clients saw a homeopathic doctor and had a blood draw for analysis to look for changes. The live blood analysis showed the debris that had been in the blood pre-sound session was cleaned up. Cells had literally reorganized into healthier patterns!

I love to encourage people to use their voice in some way – to listen to their calling. That inner voice of intuition is guiding them toward some greater sense of well-being and connection with themselves.

–Kimberly Reili

One of the most frequent comments Rieli hears after a session is, "Oh my God! I can't believe how good that felt and how it helped my mind stopped racing!" She reiterated, "Sound is an incredible way for us to step into a calmer, more meditative, more spiritually open space—that's why it's been used since ancient times.

Rieli lives in the Jackson, MI area with her husband Marvin (musician, singer, songwriter) and cats Gandalf (the Grey) and Marmalade, "an orange fluff ball." Husband and wife also have a band called Forge the Day, formed in 2019. You can find their music video and first album links from their Facebook page. Rieli enjoys gardening, journaling, and traveling in addition to helping others through sound. "I love to encourage people to use their voice in some way—to listen to their calling. That inner voice of intuition is guiding them toward some greater sense of well-being and connection with themselves."

Kimberly Rieli is a member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), and The Sound Healers Association. For more information, peruse Rieli's website singingforyoursoul.com or follow her Facebook group at facebook.com/SingingForYourSoul. Also keep an eye out for her doing sound baths, yoga and meditation accompaniment, and retreats around the state.

Healing with Sound

5 Questions for 3 Local Sound Healers

By Jennifer Carson

John Steinbauer

John Steinbauer is a certified and licensed Usui Reiki master, intuitive healer, Primordial Mediation practitioner, life coach, and sound therapist. His office is located in Ann Arbor, but he provides in-home services all over Michigan. You can learn more about his services on his website 22lunar.com or contact him by email at john.energyinmotion@yahoo.com.

How did you come to sound healing work and approximately how long have you been practicing?

It was when my father passed in 2016. Many other things happened all at once that shook my foundation and world. I went to Sedona, lived there for a short time, and started to open my inner essence to a deeper, more profound, and loving place within. The energy work and sound therapy came to me because I was open to receiving it. I've been working with sound in many ways in all my lifetimes, but in this [lifetime], I've been working in this modality for about six years.

> In all truth, you have to truly love what you do, but even more importantly, you have to love yourself. On this magical journey that's what I have opened to discover.
>
> — John Steinbauer

Among the modalities that you may use in your work, what is especially profound or helpful or special about your sound healing work?

I have discovered, from a higher state of clarity over a long time, original music that I orchestrate—creating ethereal soundscapes that cover all the solfeggio scales. My ability to be an open, clear channel to those waves of sound, and with each element

Have you created a special space for your sound healing work? Do you also work outdoors when the weather permits, or not?

I work from many centers across Michigan and use primarily my space out of Ann Arbor, but what I love, is to go to client's homes and businesses. When you do this, you not just help those you are there to see, but it helps the entire home, office, or building by clearing all stagnant energy. I perform private concerts all over: in barns, pastures, beaches, yachts, building rooftops, back yards, living rooms, and caverns. Plus, I have two albums out; our original name was The Majic, album name *Diamond Water* and our second album is *Watchers and the Stars*. We will be performing live at The Tangent in Detroit soon and at Festivals starting this summer.

Anything else you want to tell us about your work?

In all truth, you have to truly love what you do, but even more importantly, you have to love yourself. On this magical journey that's what I have opened to discover.

Lorraine Hemmeter

Lorraine Hemmeter is an occupational therapist and certified in Biofield Tuning. Her business, Sound Wisdom, is located in Dexter, MI. Learn more about Lorraine and her practice online at soundwisdomhealing.com or email her at hemmerterlm@gmail.com.

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How did you come to sound healing work and approximately how long ago?

In my sound practice I incorporate modern therapies of Biofield Tuning and ancient practices using antique Himalayan singing bowls. It is a culmination of a 30-year journey. As an occupational therapist, with a master's degree in Health Science, I specialized in sensory processing disorders. It was there that I discovered the powerful health benefits of sound and began the process of merging the ancient sound healing arts with the emerging science of the human biofield. I offer group sound baths and individual singing bowl sessions using traditional bowl layouts and principles of sacred geometry. I am also trained and certified by Eileen McKusick in Biofield Tuning.

... I discovered the powerful health benefits of sound and began the process of merging the ancient sound healing arts with the emerging science of the human biofield.

– Lorraine Hemmeter

Among the modalities that you may use in your work, what is especially profound or helpful or special about your sound healing work?

Biofield Tuning is incredibly powerful and versatile. It uses tuning forks to address unprocessed trauma and emotion that we hold in our body and biofield. These unprocessed emotions create knots in our field that block the flow of energy and can cause pain, illness, and limiting patterns of belief and behavior. Biofield Tuning can be tailored to a variety of individual needs. I offer restorative sessions for people who are recovering from illness or injury, as well as sessions focused on specific physical problems. I also offer Biofield Tuning sessions that work on resolving unprocessed trauma and emotions in a person's past, including intergenerational trauma. Resolving these issues brings flow, clarity, healing, and freedom.

What tools or instruments do you primarily work with?

I use weighted and unweighted tuning forks in a variety of frequencies and multiple antique Himalayan singing bowls, tingshas, gongs, and other traditional sound tools.

Have you created a special space for your sound healing work – please tell us about that briefly? Do you also work outdoors when the weather permits, or not?

I have two tranquil sound sanctuaries in my home, one for group sound baths and one for individual sessions. I also offer outdoor sessions in a peaceful garden setting in the summer.

Victoria Schon
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Danielle Groth

Danielle Groth is a Holy Fire III Karuna Reiki Master, Clinical EFT Practitioner, and a licensed Vibrational Sound Practitioner, meditation teacher, and the owner of I Am Well, LLC. Her office is located in Ann Arbor. Learn more about Groth on her website, iamwellreiki.com or contact her at Danielle@iamwellreiki.com.

How did you come to sound healing work and approximately how long ago?

I first fell in love with sound healing in 2018 when I was introduced to the frame drum. It wasn't long after that moment that I attended my first sound bath and then gong bath. Experiencing vibrations throughout my body that were created through drumming and singing bowls led to a noticeably positive impact on my physical, mental, and spiritual

Experiencing vibrations throughout my body that were created through drumming and singing bowls led to a noticeably positive impact on my physical, mental, and spiritual health!

– Danielle Groth

health! I loved how energized, yet rested and clear, I felt after a sound bath. When I found out the bowls could actually be placed and played on the body, I knew I needed to learn more.

Among the modalities that you may use in your work, what is especially profound or helpful or special about your sound healing work?

I became a licensed vibrational sound therapy practitioner in early 2019. Soon after, I introduced Zen therapeutic singing bowls into my Ann Arbor based reiki and EFT practice as well as tuning forks and the frame drum. My clients experience beautiful results through individual healing sessions with the bowls and forks played on and around the body. Many of my clients experiencing anxiety find that the sound and vibrations from the bowls quiet their busy minds. With my clients who are experiencing depression, feeling numb or empty is often a description they share as well as the several people I see with Parkinson's disease. These clients find encouragement and hope when they actually *feel* the vibrations.

What tools or instruments do you primarily work with?

I use Zen therapeutic bowls and weighted and unweighted tuning forks during my private sessions. I also love leading group sessions, workshops, and retreats blending sound healing with other elements such as meditation, yoga, and spiritual devotions. I use Himalayan and crystal singing bowls, chimes, a wave drum, an Idiopan, and a Rav Vast drum to create a relaxing and healing group sound experience.

Have you created a special space for your sound healing work – please tell us about that briefly? Do you also work outdoors when the weather permits, or not?

I share my love of sound healing through my energy medicine business called I Am Well. I am often invited as a speaker and healer and bring my skills and sound instruments on location, both indoors and outdoors, as well as to homes for personal gatherings, businesses, and other group events, including schools to teach kids the importance of self-care.

UNSIICIYAPI, WAWOOHOLA, CANTOGNAKE:

HUMILITY, RESPECT, LOVE

Healing through Service

By Michelle McLemore

What do you get when you merge a life called to support adolescents, spiritual awakening that all are one, and an ongoing relationship with the Lakota people? Omega Commons and a staff that lives to serve in higher truth and humility.

When you step out of your vehicle into the parking lot of Omega Commons, the calmness of this neighborhood in Adrian, MI wraps around you. Then, you notice the gentle nods to a deeper way of life. The building is a cornflower blue, a perennial of the grasslands, also psychologically shown to calm us physiologically and emotionally. To the right of the door is a signpost near tall pampas grass. In both Spanish and English, the sign reads, “May peace prevail on Earth.” In the distance behind it rises the newly constructed yurt.

As you walk to the door, standing nearly five feet high, is a metal bison silhouette. And on the building itself? The medicine wheel is affixed under the peak. The common black, white, red, and yellow equal quadrants is a vivid, subtle declaration that the Lakota way of life, love, and learning will be explored within the center for each client’s total health.

I joined Jon Schoonmaker, Licensed Professional Counselor and owner of Omega Commons, and co-worker Ryan Richardson, Certified Personal Trainer and wellness guide, to talk about their beliefs, practices, and actions uniting multiple cultures into the awareness of one healing humanity.

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Omega Commons provides space for like-minded health and healing practitioners. Schoonmaker explained, “We are a collaborative here—we have the same vision and support each other. Our services are grounded in a deeper healing modality. Everyone here believes in the resilience of the human soul to heal rather than ‘just manage’ which is how the typical mental health profession functions.” He emphasized, “We don’t ‘manage’ stuff here. We heal.”

At 55, Schoonmaker has 30 years as a licensed professional counselor in personal healing and empowerment. He opened his personal practice in 2010. “The focus of my work is healing trauma and correcting problematic behavior patterns.” Yet, it is Schoonmaker’s work with youths beyond the counseling office that has brought him national attention and enabled youths to heal through serving in a transcontinental experience.

He developed the Legacy Program as an empowerment experience for school communities. Schools hire his team to do team building, stress reduction, assemblies, and other student enrichment activities. Over time, he fine-tuned the process. “We’ve created a line of understanding that I’ve seen change so many lives,” Schoonmaker said. “It’s powerful. I worked years pulling from various processes and building it into a movement of grace, safety, and vulnerability.”

Richardson has also witnessed the impact in the local community and the Middle College students in Adrian, MI. Richardson, added, “I know it is true because kids will contact us later saying, ‘that was the first time I shared X’ or ‘that was the first time one of my good friends heard me,’” and even more powerful… ‘that was the first time I felt understood.’”

Schoonmaker is also the founder of Omega Youth Programs and Wolakota Youth Programs, a 501c3 nonprofit youth-serving agency. He said, “I wanted a place for kids to pay it forward. I found that relationships are the primary way of healing and communicating the healing.”

After receiving multiple fliers about Pine Ridge Reservation, in South Dakota, he “decided to trust it.” With two other friends, he drove west and pulled into a small store in Manderson (which happened to be the center of the reservation.) After a long conversation with a local, he learned the churches that had come to “serve” have not served the community’s true need—ongoing support. He heard and responded.

Schoonmaker organized his first group visit in 2003 to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation at Wounded Knee. He enthusiastically explained, “It is built on mutual respect. It’s not a mission. It is a collaborative of kids from two different worlds sharing culture and experience, programming, genuine interaction—an authentic way to break down barriers and walls.”

Jon Schoonmaker

It was the children of the Wounded Knee District School who eventually named Schoonmaker's program, "Wolakota." "Wo" as a prefix implies "very" or "to a great extent," Richardson explained. So "Wolakota" means "Big friendship"—between Native and non-Native youths. It is peace, balance, and coming together.

Schoonmaker's groups showed up as he vowed. Initially they "hung out" in the park 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. interacting with the kids, families, and responding to needs. "Most importantly, we were building relationships," Schoonmaker stated. His group would return two to three times a year, every year.

At one point, "One of the [Native] kids went to the principal of Wounded Knee and asked if we could go to the school," Schoonmaker related. Though doubtful, the principal consented. After the first morning's interactions, Schoonmaker's group was asked back for the afternoon and the rest of the week.

"After that, the visits were within the structure of the school day followed by more community sharing in the park. Time building, culture sharing, mentoring, tutoring, singing, and heart opening—every kid got to experience the group and love," Schoonmaker explained with a voice mixed with passion and compassion.

The group website explains a bit deeper: "Wolakota Youth programs creates opportunities for Native and non-Native teens to build meaningful relationships that have the power to bend the 'arc of history' toward reconciliation, accountability, and healing. During Wolakota experiences, teens break down barriers through intentional interaction and the exchange of ideas and culture."

"It's a beautiful experience," Richardson added in. "The effect someone can have on a culture and how interaction can be a beautiful life interrupt!"

At this point Schoonmaker laughed pointing at Richardson. "Look how excited you get!" Richardson chuckled with him, while humbled tears glistened in both men's eyes.

The impact on both adults and youths of all involved is clear. Richardson went on share that in his four years of mentoring on the trips, he had seen three different principals at the school. Schoonmaker nodded. "It's ironic that as a white man, I'm more of a consistent person in their lives, than the school staff."

Richardson also smiled, adding, "The kids on the Pine Ridge reservation gave me my name—Ryan the Lion. It is how I define myself from a holistic perspective."

Eventually, Havasupai Reservation in the Grand Canyon also opened to Omega Youth and Wolakota group involvements. The brochures explained, "Through Omega and Wolakota, many youths have overcome substantial obstacles in their lives whether it is negative past experiences, poor family dynamics, drugs/alcohol, and poverty."

Yet, it is Schoonmaker's work with youths beyond the counseling office that has brought him national attention and enabled youths to heal through serving in a transcontinental experience.

"Kids struggle. We struggle the same and heal the same; it's quite powerful," Schoonmaker mused.

In the interest of advancing the human experience, I asked, "What three things would be helpful for every child to learn?"

Schoonmaker's answers…

"Number 1: There is no such thing as separation."

"Number 2: There is no such thing as separation."

"And number 3?" Yes, here he paused and smiled playfully. "There is no such thing as separation."

Schoonmaker went on to elaborate: "It's a lie. Kids know it, and then they learn the lie, and then they fight to keep the lie. If we could keep them knowing that we belong to each other, and we are connected and interconnected and not separate… to keep them from not losing that…." He gently shook his head.

The annual trips stalled, of course, when Covid-19 crept across the world. It is with optimism and openness that Schoonmaker ponders what comes next. Richardson questioned, "Does it stay small and intimate? Or is there a possibility of growth?"

Schoonmaker nodded. "We are sitting on a powder keg for this kind of work for healing. It isn't a band-aid; it's deep healing and it can't stay small."

Due to an unlawful arrest on a family vacation (with all charges eventually dismissed), Schoonmaker confided, "a platform is opening up." [*Insider Edition* has spotlighted the multiple abuses of power that transpired across the police and judicial system in Schoonmaker's case.] "Something has to change. This happened so I can affect change on a bigger level. That's where we are sitting as a community. I am aware of the responsibility I have to remain in integrity and stay true to the calling of my life. We are grounding people in the reality of who they are—spiritual beings having a human experience."

Schoonmaker continued, "I'm convinced that the people in my life, like," [he head-motioned to Richardson] "and circumstances in my life, have put me in the right place to step into this at this time to speak what needs to be said to the systems in power."

While waiting for a time when the trips can begin again, Schoonmaker and the Wolakota board were inspired to build a yurt. "It provides us with a grounded space for the Wolakota community. We have room for up to 50 for a gathering and that ceremonial space will keep the community connected when we aren't out doing programming," Schoonmaker shared. Richardson and local builder friends, assisted in the construction.

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> All of these boxes (in the modern world) make us sick. We need to come back to the circle, and we need to gather again around the fire And we need to share our truths. And we need to heal.....
>
> —Ryan Richardson

Healing Through Service continued...

Richardson explained in a methodical pace: "All of these boxes (in the modern world) make us sick. We need to come back to the circle, and we need to gather again around the fire. And we need to share our truths. And we need to heal. Time and time again I have witnessed young men healing in such a beautiful way. It inspires me to be a better man myself."

Schoonmaker is the President of the Wolakota Youth board and Richardson has humbly served as a board member for four years. When asked what the program means to him, Richardson's voice softened once again. "Through the experience of engaging with these youths in a therapeutic group session, group healing model, I found it was healing my own inner child. I was coming back to my youthful self and renegotiating some of the traumas that had occurred along my path in this life." Regarding his trip involvement, he added, "I have been on a couple different trips–some profound realizations were happening in service to those I know that I am to serve."

Ryan Richardson

Practices at Omega Commons

Schoonmaker earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio and his master's degree at Siena Heights University in Adrian, Michigan. He is licensed as a Professional Counselor in the State of Michigan, certified as a Clinical Trauma Professional with the International Association of Trauma Professionals, and certified as an Advanced Heart-Centered Hypnotherapist with The Wellness Institute. He also uses Transpersonal Brain Change Therapy.

One day a client's parent called him a shaman, so he looked into the training and found he recognized practices that he had been using for years instinctively. "I don't call myself a shaman," Schoonmaker clarified. "Though, I've always been pulled to nature and certain practices. I've always been taking clients into nature." Still, he chose to complete the Power Path School of Shamanic Studies to earn the certification of Shamanic practitioner.

His specializations include interventions for at-risk adolescents, healing from sexual and physical abuse, grief counseling, adolescent development issues and support for teens and families, crisis intervention, self-esteem, and wilderness and adventure therapy. With intensity, Schoonmaker confided, "My commitment is to be for kids what I did not have. No one is not going to be served. Not on my watch."

Richardson offers a spirit-guided session including modalities such as bodywork (physical training), energy work, smoke energy clearing, and chakra alignment to harmonize the mind, body, and spirit. His background includes working for Gary Gray physical therapy where he learned the functional approach to exercise that facilitates healing in the three-dimensional holistic approach. From there clients courted him as a certified physical fitness coach and personal trainer. He gained his RYT 200 yoga instructor certification and additionally teaches Qi Gong, Tai Chi, meditation, and paddleboard yoga.

Richardson explained, "When I found the mind/body fitness field through yoga and later explorations of karate, jujitsu, and Tai chi at a Dojo in Cement City, I found myself on the right path. It was a path that was guided by my heart, and path of love, and I could share that authentically because that is who I am as a person and who I want to continue to evolve to be in the future."

Additional training came through the Friends Otter Creek teaching lodge in Ida, MI with traditions and lineage of the Turtle Clan and Lakota. He also completed Level II Usui Reiki and is in training through The Chek Institute as a Holistic Lifestyle coach.

Richardson concluded explaining, "We are open to possibility, to the great mystery, to guidance that we might have previously thought we didn't have—that we were lone wolves on this journey. The time of the lone wolf is over. Now is the time for truth.

To contact Schoonmaker, call (517) 902-1754 or email jon@liveomega.net. For Richardson, email ryan@lionseyeliestyle.live or call (734) 255-9616. To learn more about the Wolakota program, visit wolakotayouth.org. If you would like to support Wolakota Youth Programs, you can contribute through AmazonSmile.

Sustainable Health

Bacteria and Viruses – Essential to Human Life

By Meghan Marshall

Bacteria and viruses have always gotten a bad reputation in our modern society, but these microscopic microorganisms are essential to human life and can quite literally be a key aspect to our optimal health. In fact, trillions of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other microbes live all over our bodies, with the largest concentration in our intestines.

Each person has their own unique microbiome that is influenced by multiple factors including DNA, external environment, diet, mental health, and more. However, our microbiome is not set in stone at birth. It can change during different stages of our lives, such as with a large change in diet habits, the use of antibiotics, or even with illnesses like Parkinson's disease.

Bacteria and viruses have always gotten a bad reputation in our modern society, but these microscopic microorganisms are essential to human life and can quite literally be a key aspect to our optimal health.

The question most people likely have when finding out they share their body with trillions of tiny microbes is: why? Truthfully, experts are still in the process of finding out all of the different functions of the microbiota but there are some functions researchers and scientists already know for sure. A large part of the gut microbiome's purpose is to help us digest and metabolize our food properly, in addition to drug metabolism, keeping pathogenic microorganism numbers in check, maintaining the intestinal barrier, synthesizing certain vitamins, and more. The microbiome is even a key factor in the bidirectional communication between the central nervous system and the digestive system.

The organisms in the microbiome mostly utilize carbohydrates, and in the case of fiber, which is indigestible, it is fermented in the intestines where beneficial by-products are then produced that are important to digestive and general health. These by-products are called short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) and can decrease inflammation and can even reduce one's risk for illnesses like Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) or certain cancers. These SCFAs may even be beneficial for the central nervous system, thanks to the gut-brain axis. The microbiome has also been shown to assist with the breakdown and utilization of essential nutrients, like polyphenols, from foods.

The microbiome is also extremely important to the immune system. The microbes that make up the gut microbiome have been shown to be significant to the production of cytokines and T cells as well as the regulation and proper response of the immune system. In addition, the gut microbiome has the large responsibility of keeping pathogenic microbes, the microbes that can be harmful, in check. This is done both with the beneficial microbes being in a larger quantity than the pathogens and sustaining these higher numbers, as well as the beneficial microbes' ability to stimulate the immune response against pathogenic strains. The digestive system is so vital to our body's immunity that it even has its own lymphoid tissue, the gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT) which happens to be the largest mass of lymphoid tissue in the body.

The question most people likely have when finding out they share their body with trillions of tiny microbes is: why? Truthfully, experts are still in the process of finding out all of the different functions of the microbiota but there are some functions researchers and scientists already know for sure.

Clearly, the trillions of tiny microbes in our digestive system are extremely important to our health and wellness. So, what happens if there is a disruption, or dysbiosis, in the microbiome? Generally, we can have smaller amounts of the 'bad' pathogens in our digestive system without it being an issue and, in fact, it's totally normal. The problem can happen when they start to grow in number, unchecked. If the healthy microbiome gets disrupted and numbers of beneficial microbes decline, opportunistic pathogens can increase and become the dominant strains. Dysbiosis can also include a low diversity of different types of microbes in the gut. Unfortunately, there are multiple different ways the microbiome can become disrupted, including the use or overuse of antibiotics, mental or physical stress, medications, and even poor dental hygiene. Diet is also another common cause of dysbiosis, specifically with a high intake of meat and added sugars and a low intake of fiber and vegetables.

Although a dysbiotic gut microbiome has been found in conjunction with chronic illness, the exact relationship between the two is unknown. That being said, there are many different diseases that have some type of association with a disrupted microbiome including Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer's Disease (AD), Parkinson's

Disease (PD), autism, metabolic disorders like type 2 diabetes and obesity, psoriatic arthritis, allergies, autoimmune diseases, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, and more. Parkinson's disease, a well-known disease of the central nervous system, often includes gastrointestinal symptoms, and when fecal samples of PD patients were taken, it was found they had a decreased concentration of SCFAs and markers of dysbiosis with the possibility there may be certain specific microbes that are associated with this disease. In AD, a dysbiotic microbiome has been shown to have some correlation with the progression of the disease. Some studies have even shown that in depression models, SCFAs are decreased.

As mentioned, the exact role of dysbiosis in many common chronic diseases is unknown, and whether the dysbiosis is a side effect of the disease or a predisposing factor to developing the disease needs further exploration.

With the obvious need to support the gut microbiome to help reduce the risk of disease and aim for optimal health, what actions can be taken to do this?

One of the easiest ways to support your microbiome is to eat a diet that supports your beneficial bacteria, which includes both prebiotic and probiotic elements.

One of the easiest ways to support your microbiome is to eat a diet that supports your beneficial bacteria, which includes both prebiotic and probiotic elements. The Mediterranean diet is one of the most widely studied diets with a proven benefit to health. This diet contains many of the microbiome-supporting factors, including a high intake of whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, plant proteins and healthy fats while limiting intake of animal proteins, added sugars and refined grains. Another supportive measure is to eat naturally probiotic foods like low-sugar yogurt, kimchi, sauerkraut, kefir, miso, and tempeh. Prebiotic foods are high in certain types of fiber and are found in foods like beans and legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables such as onions, garlic, asparagus, barely ripe bananas, and Jerusalem artichokes.

The gut microbiome is so wonderfully complex and even with all that is already known about the microbiome, research has only scratched the surface.

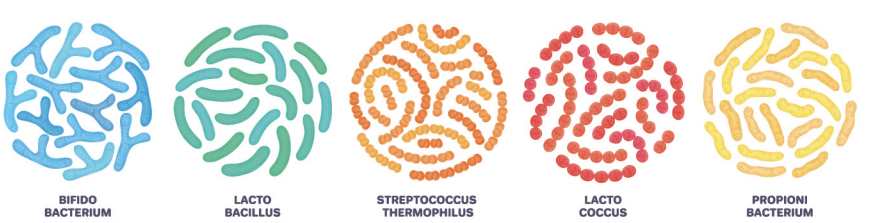
However, a healthy diet is only part of the puzzle for supporting the microbiome. Trying to reduce stress or implementing stress-reduction techniques like meditation or mindfulness, getting regular adequate sleep, and engaging in regular physical activity are extremely important as well.

Probiotics are currently very popular and although they definitely have a place in optimizing the microbiome, different probiotic strains have different purposes and many probiotic products on the market don't actually contain what they claim and may even contain additional ingredients not listed. For these reasons, it's best to work with a medical practitioner before supplementing with probiotics.

The microbiome can also be supported by limiting use of antibiotics except when truly necessary and avoiding the use of antibacterial products and soaps.

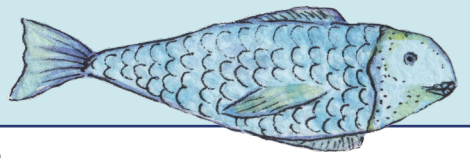
The gut microbiome is so wonderfully complex and even with all that is already known about the microbiome, research has only scratched the surface. What is known is that a healthy microbiome can help you lead a healthy life and reduce your chances of illness and disease, so make sure to take care of yours!

Meghan Marshall is a Registered Dietician with a master's degree in Nutrition and Functional Medicine. Meghan currently works as both a clinical and community dietician and is the owner of Black Moon Nutrition + Wellness. She is the creator and writer for Black Moon Nutrition at blackmoonnutritionblog.com.



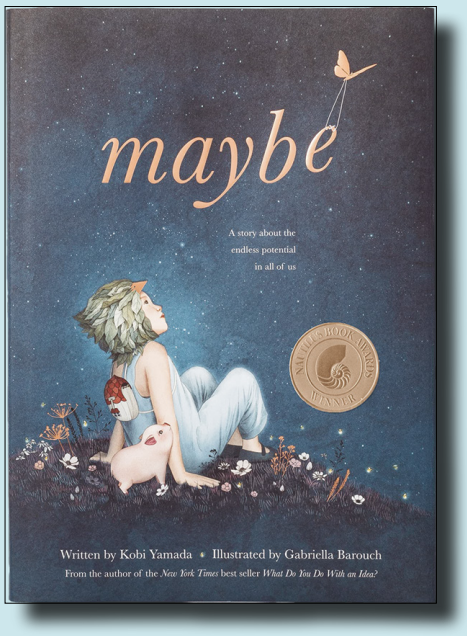
The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section

Children's Book Picks



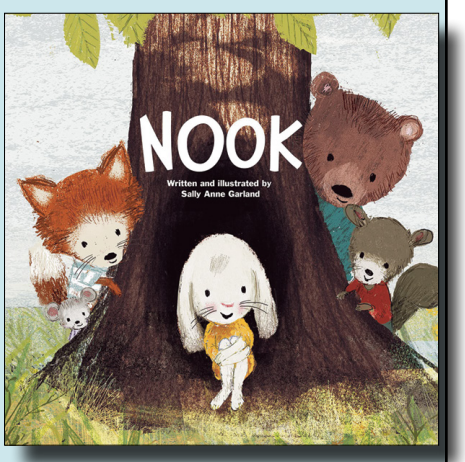
Maybe
By Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Gabriella Barouch

You are the only you there ever has been or ever will be. You are unique in all the universe. Just the odds of you being here at this exact place and this exact time are so great and so rare that it will never happen again. Written by New York Times best-selling author Kobi Yamada, this is a story for everything you will do and everything you can be. It's a story about all the possibilities ahead of you. It's for who you are right now and it's for all the magical, unbounded potential you hold inside. With its beautiful visual storytelling and timeless message, *Maybe* is an inspiring story for kids of all ages.


maybe
A story about the endless potential in all of us
Written by Kobi Yamada • Illustrated by Gabriella Barouch
From the author of the New York Times best seller What Do You Do With an Idea?

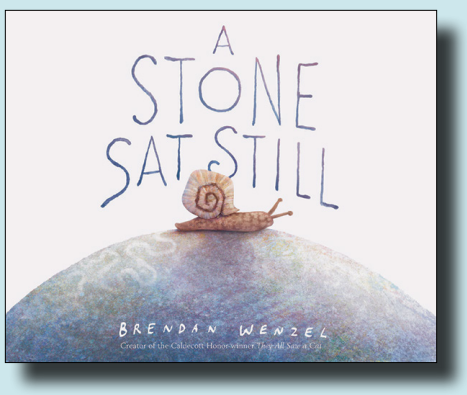
Nook
By Sally Anne Garland

Nook is small and shy, and she likes to sit in the cozy, comfy space of a hollow tree watching others play. When someone comes along to take Nook's space, she feels lost and afraid, until she discovers she has friends looking out for her in ways she never imagined! This gentle story explores shyness and sensory needs, and inspires kindness, inclusion, and friendship.



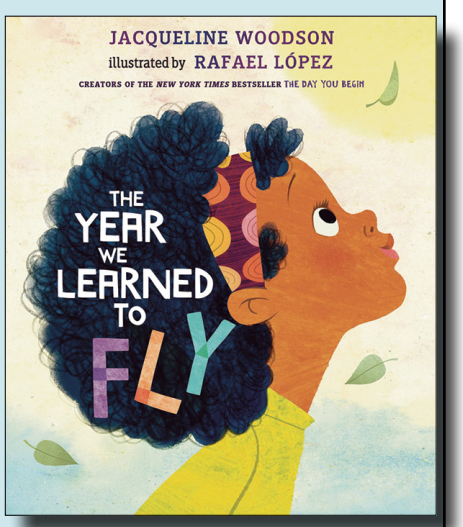
A Stone Sat Still
By Brendan Wenzel

A Stone Sat Still tells the story of a seemingly ordinary rock—but to the animals that use it, it is a resting place, a kitchen, a safe haven...even an entire world. This is a gorgeous exploration of perspective, perception, and the passage of time, with an underlying environmental message that is timely and poignant.



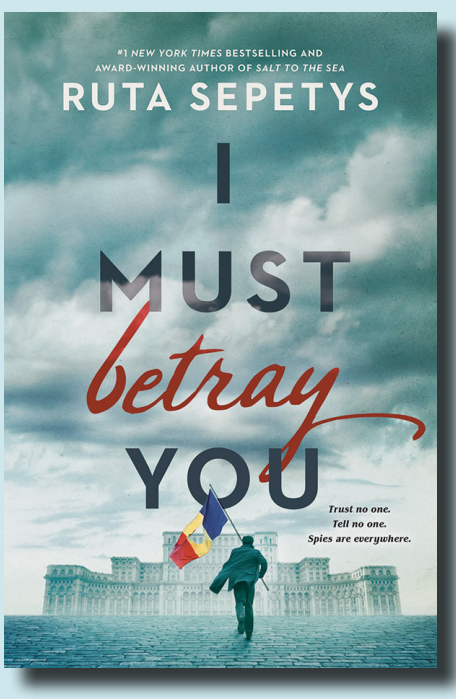
The Year We Learned to Fly
By Jacqueline Woodson, Illustrated by Rafael Lopez

On a dreary, stuck-inside kind of day, a brother and sister heed their grandmother's advice: *"Use those beautiful and brilliant minds of yours. Lift your arms, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and believe in a thing. Somebody somewhere at some point was just as bored you are now."* And before they know it, their imaginations lift them up and out of their boredom. Then, on a day full of quarrels, it's time for a trip outside their minds again, and they are able to leave their anger behind. This precious skill, their grandmother tells them, harkens back to the days long before they were born, when their ancestors showed the world the strength and resilience of *their* beautiful and brilliant minds. Jacqueline Woodson's lyrical text and Rafael Lopez's dazzling art celebrate the extraordinary ability to lift ourselves up and imagine a better world.


JACQUELINE WOODSON
illustrated by RAFAEL LÓPEZ
CREATORS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER THE DAY YOU BEGIN
THE YEAR WE LEARNED TO FLY

I Must Betray You
By Ruta Sepetys

A gut-wrenching, startling historical thriller about communist Romania and the citizen spy network that devastated a nation. Romania, 1989. Communist regimes are crumbling across Europe. Seventeen-year-old Cristian Florescu dreams of becoming a writer, but Romanians aren't free to dream; they are bound by rules and force. Amidst the tyrannical dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu in a country governed by isolation and fear, Cristian is blackmailed by the secret police to become an informer. He's left with only two choices: betray everyone and everything he loves—or use his position to creatively undermine the most notoriously evil dictator in Eastern Europe.


#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AND AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF SALT TO THE SEA
RUTA SEPETYS
I MUST betray YOU
Trust no one.
Tell no one.
Spies are everywhere.

Cristian risks everything to unmask the truth behind the regime, give voice to fellow Romanians, and expose to the world what is happening in his country. He eagerly joins the revolution to fight for change when the time arrives. But what is the cost of freedom? Master storyteller Ruta Sepetys is back with a historical thriller that examines the little-known history of a nation defined by silence, pain, and the unwavering conviction of the human spirit.

You may purchase these books at shopcrazywisdom.com by either visiting the website or scanning the QR code (right).

Conscious Parenting

Five Lessons From My Two-Year-Old

By Katy Gladwin

This year I have had the pleasure of spending every single waking and sleeping moment with my two-year-old. While I love her very much, I also had a very hard time, until recently, finding a daycare we connected with that had availability. Spending this absurd amount of time with a toddler has made me a little less sane but has also taught me some very valuable lessons. These are lessons I hope to include in my daily life and will do my best to not force her to outgrow.

> Take a moment, find something to make a boring task more fun.

Party Every Day

Why not?! We had a lovely bonfire gathering with friends this summer, and it was so fun for her that she asked for a party every day after that. I tried to figure out ways we could "party" every day, because having that fun connection with friends and family was so great. Sometimes that looked like a playground trip or a walk in the woods with her little buddies, while other times it was a smaller family dance party, or a singing party in the car. I think it's important to point out the moments when we're having a party—also known as finding the joy in the mundane.

I try to remember this when I'm doing chores or just putzing along doing the everyday work of motherhood/adulthood. Take a moment, find something to make a boring task more fun. Put on a song, laugh with friends, find something to feel energetically joyful about.

> It's really important for toddlers to feel like they can watch and learn without being rushed.

Slow Down

While this might seem like the opposite of a party every day, it is really important for toddlers to feel like they can watch and learn without being rushed. So, this might mean I need to let her take ten minutes to figure out how to put her socks on or sit with her on the sidewalk while she watches a bug go by. I notice myself feeling like I need to speed things up, all the time, and she reminds me to sit, and watch, and listen. To be still for a few minutes, even if it's just for noticing my breath—in and out.

Stop Eating When You're Full

My daughter is so good at this! I know it's super common to tell kids to "just eat three more bites," and sometimes it's necessary—especially if you have a busy, wandering kind of kiddo. But if you're able to tap into what's going on in their bodies, and trust that they know, then you can often allow them to guide. When she's satiated, she stops eating! Even if the food is her favorite—cookies, sweet potato fries, mac and cheese. As a professional health coach, I meet so many women who don't know how to tell if their bodies are full. For whatever reason, many of us have disconnected from the signals our bodies tell us around food and satiety. We often don't need to finish all the food on our plate—our eyes are bigger than our stomach kind of thing. Little humans know when to stop eating, and as long as we continue to listen, and trust them, they should be able to keep hearing their bodies little voices throughout childhood and into adulthood.

> We're terrible at asking for our needs to be met, and physical touch is a biological need.

Take a Hug

She says, "I take a hug?" And "take" is exactly what she means! "This hug is for me." I love when she takes a hug. We need physical touch from our people—our physiology changes when we receive hugs and loving touch from others. Our oxytocin (the love and bonding hormone) levels rise and our nervous system can relax into safety. It also allows me to know what she needs, she asks and receives, and I can easily provide her with that feeling of certain safety. We're terrible at asking for our needs to be met, and physical touch is a biological need. Take a hug! Your nervous system and your relationships will thank you.

> This is so hard to learn, especially if you have caregiver syndrome.

First, Say "no"—Then Change Your Mind If You Want

We all know a two-year-old's favorite word is no. This used to annoy me, but now I love how she just has boundaries! She says no, but then always has the option to change her mind. This is so hard to learn, especially if you have caregiver syndrome. We have all heard the saying "No is a complete sentence" and I think we should all be taking this more to heart. Similar to the idea of 'under promise and over perform,' standing in our integrity and confident in our boundaries is a lesson we should all take to heart. Sometimes our boundaries are hard to find in the moment or under pressure—so saying no first can allow time to find where our true needs and desires meet expectations.

Katy Gladwin CHC, WHC, as a Holistic Doula and health guide has been supporting women in body autonomy and sovereignty through the childbearing years for over a decade. Through private and group programs, she teaches, guides, listens, and carries sacred healing in whatever form each women finds they need most. Gladwin is trained as a coach though an Integrative Medicine Lens and has studied naturopathic medicine and modalities including homeopathy, herbal wisdom, craniosacral therapy, HeartMath(R), breath work, and holistic nutrition. To contact her, email katy@katygladwin.com *or visit her online at katygladwin.com.*

Go Outside! A How-To Guide For the Urban Family

By Cayla Samano

As we shiver out of another Michigan winter and into warmer weather, I am building my usual short list of activities to keep myself sane. This list has become shorter than usual due to pandemic safety precautions. Ordinarily it would include more frequent visits with extended family and more friend get-togethers. My sticky note sanity plan has become heavier on more practical reminders like “Sleep more regular hours!” “Take Vitamin D!” and “GO OUTSIDE” which is written in all caps.

While most of the items in my sanity plan have health benefits, only going outside offers me the powerful all-in-one package of a fresh perspective, easy exercise, and the potential for some dopamine-boosting delight...

While most of the items in my sanity plan have health benefits, only going outside offers me the powerful all-in-one package of a fresh perspective, easy exercise, and the potential for some dopamine-boosting delight, such as my view last week of a coyote frolicking through fresh snow. Making time to enjoy nature can have such a huge impact on human well-being that the lack of it has been labeled as a nonmedical disorder.

I experienced *Nature Deficit Disorder* for the first time at fourteen. My small, rural community was rich in land but poor in access to anything else. Consequently, I was used to spending four to six hours a day outside. (This was also before every child had a smartphone, tablet or even steady internet access, but I digress.) When I moved into high school, I discovered that students spent most of the eight-hour day inside with little exposure to natural light. While I’d always loved school, I immediately began to experience what I can only describe as mild and constant cabin fever. I became moodier, gained weight, and had less energy.

Many of my symptoms were classic signs of a condition which the journalist and author Richard Louv introduced as the term “*Nature Deficit Disorder”* in his book *Last Child in the Woods*, published in 2005. It describes how a lack of time spent in nature can have negative effects on a person’s mental and physical wellbeing. Louv’s theories strongly suggest that spending so much of our time inside, indoors, and in virtually constructed realities is unnatural and unhealthy. Is it possible that we have become too disconnected from a natural world that should feel more like our native habitat? Have we lost a deep biological connection with the ecosystems that we share?

Is it possible that we have become too disconnected from a natural world that should feel more like our native habitat? Have we lost a deep biological connection with the ecosystems that we share?

The Japanese became the first to develop a modern nature immersion practice as a response to urban stress. They call it *shinrin-yoku, or* “forest bathing.” Studies done since the early 2000s by Yoshifumi Miyazaki at the University of Chiba and Qing Li from Nippon Medical School in Tokyo use field tests, hormone analysis, and brain imaging technology to uncover the molecular effects nature has on human bodies. They found that even twenty minutes of walking among trees lowered blood pressure, improved mood and concentration, and could possibly boost the immune system. This study corroborated similar studies done by the environmental psychologists Rachel and Stephen Kaplan at the University of Michigan in the 1970s. The Kaplans observed that spending time in nature improved cognition, memory, and reversed the effects of “Cognitive Burnout,” a modern urban phenomenon they named for its fatal effects on attention, mood, memory, and mental stamina. (Interestingly, the Japanese observed a similar phenomenon, K*aroshi*, which means “death by overwork.”)

There is a double-edged problem here; how to engage our children in physical and tactile exploration among increasingly virtual options, and how to incorporate a love of the outside when the outside is what we’ve been taught to fear.

As city-dwelling becomes more prevalent and the pandemic continues to limit opportunities to interact outside of our bubbles, parents with children are faced with increasingly desperate conditions. There is a double-edged problem here; how to engage our children in physical and tactile exploration among increasingly virtual options, and how to incorporate a love of the outside when the outside is what we've been taught to fear. We may know what’s good for us, but how do we convince our children away from screens and get them interested in an experience (playing outside) that is increasingly foreign to so many. Fortunately, you don’t need access to the Grand Canyon to be able to build a nature connection practice with your kids. Here are some easy-access ideas to enhance nature connection wherever you live.

Inside:

1. **Pet Plants**: Safe herbs or easy to care for tropical plants can be great ways to teach kids about plant life cycles. (Read plant labels for varieties that might be toxic for pets or toddlers.)

2. **Fishbowl** or **Fairy Terrarium**: Watching fish is incredibly relaxing, and creating a terrarium is an excellent way to learn about soil and plant relationships! Top it off by creating an ecosystem for fairies or miniature dinosaurs. (Matthaei Botanical Garden has quite a variety of fairy garden accessories.)

3. **Chia Pets:** A reoccurring fad, these fun ceramic pots have anthropomorphized the chia plant for kids of many generations. Look online for options, from dogs to cartoon characters.

Front Porches and Windows:

1. **Install a bird bath or bird feeder by a window.** Be prepared for a possible war with the squirrels! Look for bird feeders that are squirrel-proof.

2. **Plant a porch or balcony veggie or flower garden in small pots.** Tomatoes and peppers tend to be easily accessible and fun to watch as they develop. Zinnias are fast and colorful growers.

3. **Install a porch swing!** There's nothing more fun than sitting outside to observe all the weird wildlife that can be found in neighborhoods. From my tiny front porch in the middle of town I've seen skunks, foxes, rabbits, red tail hawks, and voles (what?).

Around the Neighborhood:

1. **Tree Scavenger Hunt:** Find an easy tree guide from the library and help your kids point out and identify trees as you walk around the block. (I'm sure there are also apps for this, but you run the risk of technology taking over the experience.)

2. **Adopt a corner:** There might be a place in a nearby park where you can get access to a community garden, or an abandoned corner of a park where you can make it your business to clean up trash. This is sometimes called wild tending.

3. **Adopt a Park:** Find a park you and your kids love. Make it one that you can get to in under twenty minutes. Make it part of your weekly schedule to go and play for at least an hour, as many times as you can in all seasons, and at different times of day when possible. Creating a tradition like this builds a deep connection to place.

4. **Find a Sit Spot/ Do Some Grounding:** Adopting a particular place to sit regularly and be still has roots in Japanese Forest Bathing as well as other mindfulness practices. Find a place where you can put down a big blanket, or an easy-to-carry chair. You could bring a picnic, or lie down in the shade in the park, or read a book. Now relax. Try it!

Where to Go?
Washtenaw County is rich in parks and nature preserves. Here are a few of my favorites.

1. **County Farm Park**: Great playground, easy access nature trails

2. **Matthai Botanical Garden**: Indoor conservatory open all year, an interactive children's garden, and easy access nature trails

3. **Leslie Science and Nature Center**: Excellent rescue raptors programs, children's camps, and wooded nature trails

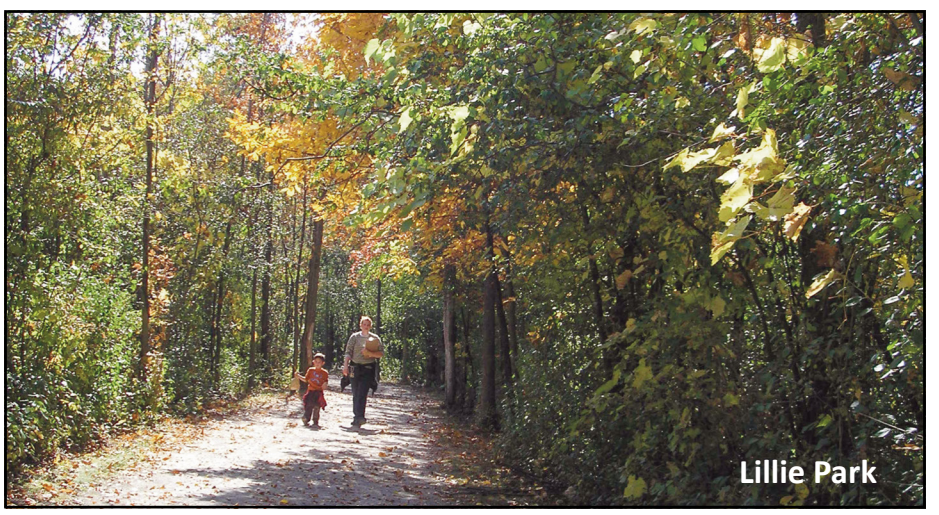
4. **Bird Hills Nature Area**: Wilder exploration and views of the Huron River

5. **Barton Nature Area**: Can be connected to Bird Hills, beautiful and easy terrain, and a variety of ecosystems along the Huron River

6. **Gallup Park**: Playground, picnic sites and tables, river-side paved trails, and canoe and paddle boat rental

7. **Lillie Park:** Playground, nature trails, disc golf course, easy wooded trails

8. **Nichols Arboretum**: A variety of ecosystems, easy trails and more difficult wooded ones, river views, a picnic valley and lots of places to explore



Going outside is such a vital part of feeling human that whole organizations have been formed just to help us remember what it's like.

Going outside is such a vital part of feeling human that whole organizations have been formed just to help us remember what it's like. The Association of Nature and Forest Therapy offers adult programs for those interested in deepening their nature connection practice and sharing it with others. Nature connection practices may be a crucial step in the rebalancing of our relationship with the universe—and one blue-green planet in particular. Perhaps if we can teach our children how to play in the dirt, they will become adults who respect the ground they walk on, and better advocates for the natural world that supports us all.

Cayla Samano has been a certified Nature Immersion Guide since 2017, leading private and public nature immersion experiences throughout southeast Michigan. She is currently finishing her MFA in Drawing at Eastern Michigan University. Cayla's first children's book, How To Meet a Forest *was published in 2020. For more information about Nature Immersion experiences, contact Cayla at* a2shinrinyoku.com

Kids in the Community Column

The Seelie Court of Ann Arbor's Faery Artists and Events

By Laura K. Cowan

What have our fairy friends and their artists been up to during the pandemic? To brighten everyone's spirits, I wanted to track down some fairy fun this spring for the young ones. Might we see more fairy doors pop up around Ann Arbor? Maybe you've seen glimmers of whimsical fun around Ann Arbor in the chalk drawings of the ephemeral and adorable characters dreamed up by Ann Arbor's David Zinn. It's almost time for the return of Shakespeare in the Arb, and we're celebrating with a production of the fairy-packed fun of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Ann Arbor is one of the best places around to find events and artists who work on a fairy theme, but like the fae they can be hiding in plain sight. I went searching under every rock and leaf, even a few book jackets, to find you the best fairy-themed events, artists, and authors in Ann Arbor to find while we're still in need of a little fun.

Shakespeare in the Arb, A 20th Anniversary Fairy-stravaganza

Visit your favorite characters, like Puck the trickster fairy, as actors weave themselves among the trees of the beautiful Ann Arbor Arboretum.

Beloved annual summer event Shakespeare in the Arb is celebrating its belated 20th anniversary after a Covid hiatus, with a fairy-tastic performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Visit your favorite characters, like Puck the trickster fairy, as actors weave themselves among the trees of the beautiful Ann Arbor Arboretum.

Director Kate Mendeloff says the event this year should kick off with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on June second, running Thursday through Sunday every week until June 26th. This is an easy event to miss in the early summer because, like a glimpse of the fairies, it's here and gone in the blink of an eye. Mendeloff says you can also get involved if you are of the thespian persuasion: "Auditions are the weekend of Shakespeare's birthday, the 22nd through 24th of April, and are open to community actors, dancers, and musicians." You can keep an eye on the Shakespeare in the Arb Facebook page for details. "Young children ages 5-8 are welcome to participate as fairies, and should contact us in May," Mendeloff adds.

What's it like performing with fairies in the Arb in one of these popular productions? "The Arb is an actor in all of our plays," Mendeloff explains. "We are inspired by the natural landscape and stage scenes organically in the hills and valleys and groves. My aim is to create a 360-degree picture in every scene, so the audience really believes they are in the reality of the events with the actors."

Sounds fabulous. If your kiddos want to be part of this supernatural all-outdoor theater production, what better way to get involved than as a fairy themselves? Shakespeare in the Arb does charge for admission to cover costs.

Shakespeare in the Arb is part of the University of Michigan LSA Residential College. You can find more information at their website lsa.umich.edu/rc/programs-and-community-engagement/shakespeare-in-the-arb.html. Or visit their Facebook page for up-to-date information on auditions and production schedules: facebook.com/ShakespeareintheArb. Director Kate Mendeloff is reachable at mendelof@umich.edu.

Ann Arbor District Library Fairy Art Online Events

Ann Arbor's District Library lost no time at the beginning of the pandemic putting programming online for kids. This includes several videos on fairy-themed art projects put together with the Ann Arbor Art Center. Richard Retyi is the Communications and Marketing Manager for AADL, and he says you can still find these videos online on the AADL Youtube channel to create your own fairy art event.

"The [videos] we recently put up are how to build a woodland fairy marionette and secret treasures of the fairy door," Retyi says. "There are two drawing events there with Ann Arbor Art Center, and we still have drawing events for kids every Sunday."

Check out the AADL videos called "Magical Fairyland" and "Fantastic Fairy Garden Drawings" to connect with the best of fairy art content for kids who want to participate in the fun.

Once AADL starts hosting in-person events again, these will resume at the library, but for now are hosted online every week on an ongoing basis. To connect with the Ann Arbor District Library, you can check out the TV channel at aadl.tv.

Check out the AADL videos called "Magical Fairyland" and "Fantastic Fairy Garden Drawings" to connect with the best of fairy art content for kids who want to participate in the fun.

AADL is open for patrons but is not hosting in-person events at this time. For questions about online programming or facilities, please visit aadl.org or call (734)327-4200. The Ann Arbor District Library TV program is at aadl.tv.

Create Your Own Jonathan Wright Fairy Door Hunt

You can go on your own fairy door hunt around Ann Arbor.

It's no secret that fairies love Ann Arbor, as evidenced by the work of fairyologist Jonathan Wright, who "discovered," as he prefers to say, the fairy doors that populate the curbsides and coffee shops around town.

Now you can find fairy doors in other nearby towns, too. Wright is always working, and he's a frequent exhibitor at the Kerrytown Bookfest every spring. Last year the event was canceled due to Covid, but in no time, expect to see Wright's lovely creations being drawn in real time at the book festival. (Think something quirky like Brian Froud of The Dark Crystal and Labyrinth.) You might also spot Wright in his yellow beanie at Sweetwaters on Ashley, where he regularly draws custom murals with hidden easter eggs.

In the meantime, you can go on your own fairy door hunt around Ann Arbor. To start, there's one in the west-side Sweetwaters on Ashley, and a few in the curbs around downtown Ann Arbor, plus a really cool 3D diorama door in the rec and ed building off Packard where kids often have extracurricular activities including ballet and art classes. These fairies seem to love coffee shops and public buildings, but they can still hide in plain sight: check out the downtown Ann Arbor storefront windows, and don't forget Joe & Rosie's coffee shop in downtown Dexter if you're on the west side. You can always ask around. People in Ann Arbor seem to be in touch with the fae and know where to look if you ask them nicely. Arrange your own treasure hunt to compete with your friends to find all the doors and take photos . Don't forget to leave gifts like pennies and candy for the fairies to keep the good folk friendly. Nothing made from iron, please! The good neighbors hate anything made of this noxious metal. They say that bronze was the original metal that couldn't help the fairy folk fend off invasion in ancient times, so steer clear of that as well.

To keep up with the latest in event appearances or pick up a copy of Wright's book on the Ann Arbor Fairy Doors and how they came to be, visit urban-fairies.com.

Discover David Zinn's Whimsical Chalk Creations at Summerfest

Looking for some whimsical fun while you're around town? You've probably heard of David Zinn, or maybe you read *Crazy Wisdom's* feature on him in issue #76 (crazywisdomjournal.com/featuredstories/2020/12/17/the-whimsical-world-of-david-zinn?rq=david). Here's how to find his work as it peeks through the cracks of Ann Arbor's city streets.

Ann Arbor is one of the best places around to find events and artists who work on a fairy theme, but like the fae they can be hiding in plain sight.

David Zinn is Ann Arbor's own chalk sidewalk artist, whose creations emerge from curbs and roadsides on Ann Arbor's west side in the Bach neighborhood, and now all over the country when he travels.

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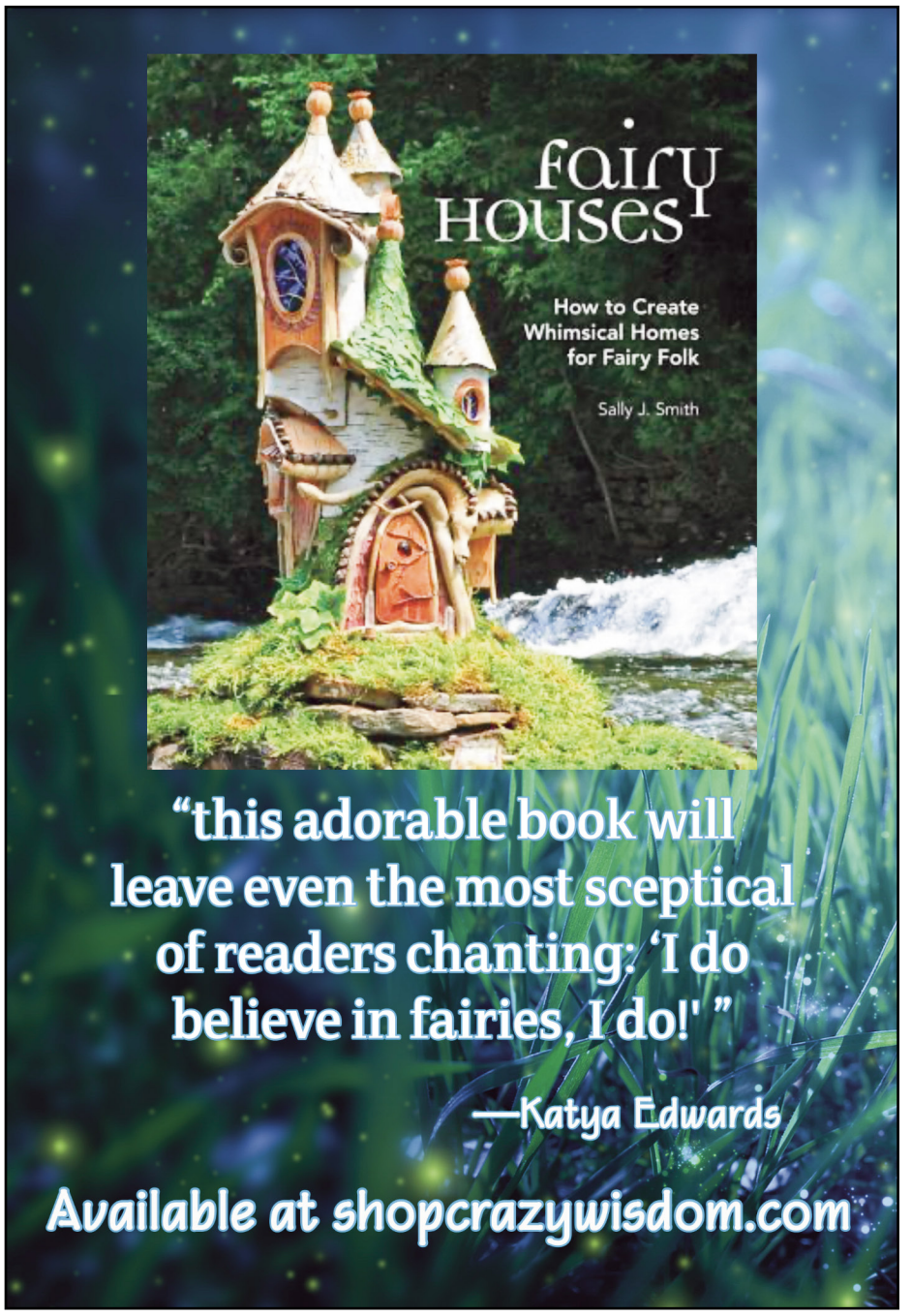

fairy houses
How to Create Whimsical Homes for Fairy Folk
Sally J. Smith
"this adorable book will leave even the most sceptical of readers chanting: 'I do believe in fairies, I do!' "
—Katya Edwards
Available at shopcrazywisdom.com

Crazy Wisdom Kids

An ongoing section of
The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

Articles, calendar listings, advertisements, music and book reviews, and other features that focus on raising conscious and spirited kids.

If you like our CW Kids section, and would like to contribute to it, contact jennifer@crazywisdom.net.
We welcome story ideas, illustrations, feature writing, and photographs.

Kids in the Community Column

The Seelie Court of Ann Arbor's Faery Artists and Events

Zinn also has been known to make an appearance at the Ann Arbor Summer Festival through Top of the Park and the Ann Arbor District Library, where Zinn draws live and hangs out with local kids. Keep an eye on the developing schedule for this year's event at a2sf.org/calendar/.

Did you know that Zinn recently released a book? You can find it on his website at zinnart.com/about-the-artist/.

We adore Zinn's Twitter and Instagram, where you can keep up with all the fun and the latest from this artist who has grown in popularity and now enjoys national fame. Watch for a repeat favorite: the pig with a wand and a tutu, or any of the other tiny animals that seem to fall in and out of our world through the paving stones.

For more information about David Zinn's latest publications and events, visit zinnart.com or email info@zinnart.com.

Jennifer Carson's Creations Speak

Jennifer Carson is Managing Editor of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*, and also moonlights as a fairy author and creator of dolls and illustrations of the fae persuasion. We caught up with the main character of one of her books, Maewyn, to ask what it's like for a fairy working with a human.

Laura Cowan: Hi Maewyn! It's nice to meet you. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Maewyn: Hello! My name is Maewyn Bridgepost and I'm a hapenny. Happenies are faeries—but not Tinkerbell-type faeries—we can't fly. We are more earth-bound, like hobbits, and about the same size… well, most of us. I'm the smallest hapenny in my village, which is called The Wedge, but I'm also the first hapenny in lots and lots of years to have a bit of magick! You can read about how I discovered my magick in the first book about my adventures, called *Hapenny Magick*.

Magick comes from within. You have to look inside yourself to find it. Only then will you be able to bring magick into the world.

– Maewyn Bridgepost

LC: What's it like to work with Jennifer? What's the creative process like when you're writing a book together?

Maewyn: Jennifer is a wonderful human—she really listens to the story I want to tell… and when I wanted her to feature my best friend, Leif, in the second book, *Tangled Magick*, she said, "Why not?" Sometimes, when the story isn't going quite like I hoped she got a little stuck—I think you humans call that writer's block. But I just needed to tell her where she got it wrong earlier, and then we were able to move on. I liked to wake her up really early, around 4 a.m., before even the roosters would start to crow, and start whispering stories to her. Good thing she keeps a notebook and a pen by her bed!

LC: Do you ever get tired of being a main character in a book? What are the down sides of fame?

Maewyn: Well, no, I don't get tired of being the main character, but I do like to share the spotlight with my friends. Since I became the guardian of The Wedge though, I've gotten used to being "famous." It does cause some problems with the trolls… apparently hapennies are good to eat, and if you're famous, even more of a delicacy. So, I try to keep my head down while in troll territory.

LC: How does magic work? Can you teach us some?

Maewyn: Of course, magick works! We see examples of magick every day, you just have to be open to seeing it. I can't teach it to you, though. Magick comes from within. You have to look inside yourself to find it. Only then will you be able to bring magick into the world.

You can learn more about Maewyn and Jennifer Carson's other fairy friends at thedragoncharmer.com. Carson can typically be found at local events like the Michigan Renaissance Festival, the Chelsea Art Market, and the Kerrytown Bookfest.

Want to find more fairy authors for kids around Ann Arbor? Check out the Kerrytown Bookfest list of previous event authors. One of our favorites is Becca Price, a frequent presenter at renaissance fairs and fairy events around Michigan, and the author of a number of fairy-focused children's tales like *Field, Forest, and Fairies* or *Fairies and Fireflies* bedtime stories. She writes at wyrmtalespress.com.

Find The Fairies at the Ann Arbor Art Fair

If you're ready to venture back out into crowds, Ann Arbor's Summer Art Fairs are a fun way to find fairy art at all levels. Pick up fairy-themed whimsical garden ornaments, or find artwork specifically dedicated to the fae.

Previous exhibitor Ariana Capraro is a young artist who created fairy-themed paintings of fairies at work. You can see samples of her work at artfair.org/artist?id=1175&m=Drawing&s=&y=2018. Capraro said of her exhibit in 2018, "My new fairy series are of four fairies working at their craft. There is a doll maker, a jeweler, a book maker, and a confectioner. They are a little different from the human idea of these professions."

The confectioner has impaled bugs on skewers and is dipping them into honey. "The size of the pieces allows me plenty of room for detail so I can tell a rich story with each picture," Capraro said in her exhibition description. "The keyhole shape is a way to link the illustrations together. This series has a little autobiographical aspect to it. The idea is that these fairies live in an old farmhouse like the one I grew up in. A lot of the furniture and details like the nails sticking out of the floorboards are things from my home."

If you're ready to venture back out into crowds, Ann Arbor's Summer Art Fairs are a fun way to find fairy art at all levels.

Want to browse the artists online from home? The Ann Arbor Street Art Fair, the original art fair other Ann Arbor art fairs are built around, has an artist directory you can view at artfair.org/directory. The State Street Art Fair is also happening in 2022. The Ann Arbor Art Fairs run from July 21-23. Visit through a virtual gallery at statestreetdistrict.org/art-fair-gallery plus get parking and bus information to plan a visit. If whimsical animals with a personality are your thing, don't miss the miniature glassworks exhibit that's a regular in the State Street Fair, where you can find bumblebees, foxes, and maybe a few dragons to take home.

Whatever you do to pass the time, we hope you include our good neighbors the fae in your adventures. Some say you can see them out of the corner of your eye when standing in a fairy circle, or mushroom ring, in the spring grass.

Whatever you do to pass the time, we hope you include our good neighbors the fae in your adventures.

Spin around eight times, fall onto the grass of the Arb, and watch the sky spin until you see fairies in the clouds.

I hope you have a blessed and peaceful spring .and find the magic waiting for you around every corner that can help you get through these challenging times.

Laura K. Cowan is a tech and wellness journalist in Ann Arbor, and co-founder of the content marketing media outlet and consulting agency Cronicle Press at www.cronicle.press. She writes the Kids in the Community Column for The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal, as well as the Healers of Ann Arbor column, where she explores various healing modalities and how people can know if they're right for them. Ms. Cowan lives outside Ann Arbor in the countryside with her family, two dogs who might be changelings, and a woods full of undines and dryads.

Maewyn on Pig
by Pat Ann Lewis MacDougall

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

Hosted by Edward Morin,
David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin

Second and Fourth Wednesday
of each month, 7-9 p.m.

All sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom.
Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link.

Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.:
Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction.
Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m.

Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.:
Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes.
Open Mic reading for 1 hour.
All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry.
Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m.

Featured readers

May 25 – Miles David Moore is film reviewer for the online arts magazine *Scene4* and author of three books of poetry: *The Bears of Paris*, *Rollercoaster,* and the recent *Man on Terrace with Wine*. From 1994 to 2017 he organized and hosted the IOTA poetry reading series in Arlington, Va., where he lives.

May 25 – Jo McDougall, Poet Laureate of Arkansas from 2018-2021, is the author of seven books of poetry and a memoir, *Daddy's Money*. She was awarded the Porter Prize Lifetime Achievement award in literature. Her latest collections of poems are *In the Home of the Famous Dead* and *The Undiscovered Room*. She lives in Little Rock.

June 22 – Shutta Crum has poems published in *Typehouse, 3rd Wednesday, Blue Unicorn, Acumen*, and a chapbook, *When You Get Here*, which won a gold Royal Palm Literary Award. Her newest book is T*he Way to the River*. Of her many books for young readers, *Thunder-Boomer!* was chosen by *Smithsonian Magazine* and *American Library Association* as a notable book.

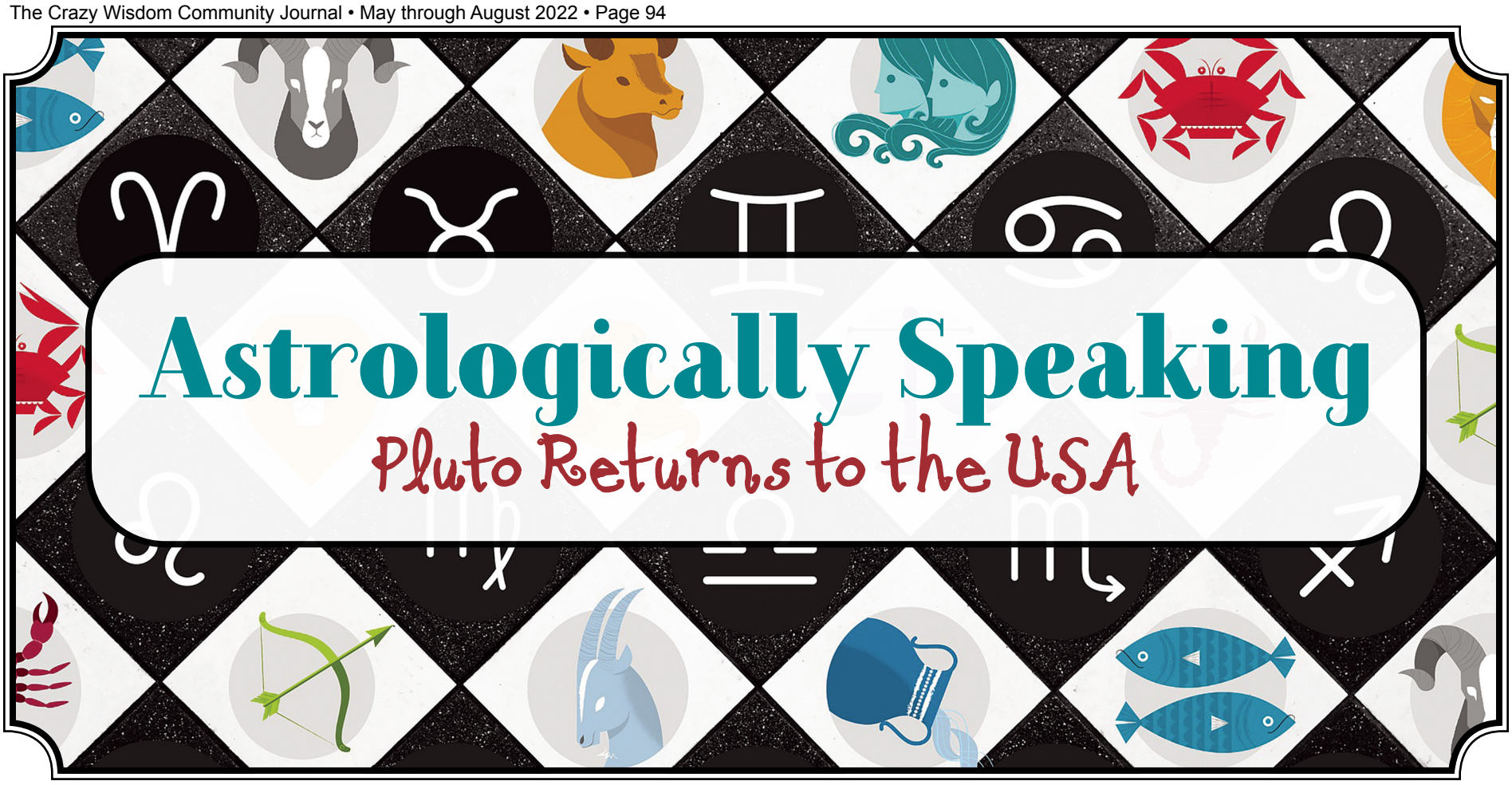
June 22 – Mike Maggio, poet and fiction writer from the DC Area, has had work published in *Potomac Review*, *Pleiades*, and L.*A. Weekly*. His newest of several books of poems is *Let's Call It Paradise*. His recent novel is *In the Valley of Granite and Steel*, and *Letters from Inside* is a collection of his stories.

July 27 – Jim Daniels' most recent of 30 poetry collections is *Gun/Shy*. Other recent books include *The Perp Walk* (fiction) and *RESPECT: The Poetry of Detroit Music* (2020), co-edited with M. L. Liebler. A native of Detroit, he lives in Pittsburgh and teaches in the Alma College low-residency MFA program.

A workshop is scheduled for the second week in August, but there is no featured poetry reading in August.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle

The Poetry Series is open to all.
There is never a charge.
https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/



Astrologically Speaking

Pluto Returns to the USA

By Catherine Carlson

Everything that has a beginning has an astrology chart: people, animals, relationships, businesses, and even countries. The birth of the United States of America took place with the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. At that moment, in the heavens, Pluto was nearing the end of its slow transit in the sign of Capricorn. On February 19th of this year Pluto made the anticipated return to that exact same place for the very first time for the United States birth chart. Pluto's orbit takes about 250 years, which means a person will never be able to experience their Pluto return, but a country can. This creates a unique moment in time to witness the United States from within or without and see firsthand what a Pluto return looks and feels like.

Everything that has a beginning has an astrology chart: people, animals, relationships, businesses, and even countries.

We astrologers still consider Pluto a planet. Its size may be small, relatively speaking, but it brings great impact. Known as God of the underworld in Greek mythology, Pluto represents power, death, rebirth, depths that are unseen, and the ability to transmute and transform, or even complete a metamorphosis. Pluto can reveal what no longer serves or has been hidden beneath the surface, knowingly or not. The United States of America was formed during a struggle for freedom. The Revolutionary War grew out of tension and dissatisfaction that had been building—very similar to what we are experiencing now. The collapse of the old regime precipitated the birth of a new country with laws and leadership that reflected the people having more power and authority. Pluto returning to this place in its orbit suggests that change is inevitable.

We can understand what may happen when Pluto returns by looking at countries that began long before ours did and have already experienced more than one Pluto return. In England, Queen Mary, a Roman Catholic, led the persecution of Protestants during the time of that country's second Pluto return in 1555-57. The following year her half-sister Elizabeth succeeded her on the throne initiating the Elizabethan period in England's history—considered to be a renaissance and "golden age." Russia saw the end of Stalin's rule when he died of a stroke during their most recent Pluto return in 1953. Lastly, at the time of Sweden's Pluto return in 2015-16, the country permitted over 160,000 refugees to enter, during the European Migrant Crisis. In these few examples we can get a sense of the intensity of the time period surrounding a Pluto return and the impact these developments had on each country.

Known as God of the underworld in Greek mythology, Pluto represents power, death, rebirth, depths that are unseen, and the ability to transmute and transform, or even complete a metamorphosis.

Comparing Pluto's past with the present we can see the parallels. This time in the U.S. is similar to the 1770's—complete with discord and division along with powerful events that have already begun to unfold. This is like the chrysalis stage of metamorphosis, a long period of interior change and struggle that requires a great deal of energy. The outcome is unknown, we can only speculate. With Pluto in the sign of Capricorn, earthly matters such as our economy, institutions, and the way we live in general, are areas that will continue to be highlighted. This position of Pluto tells us our country has always placed a high value on status and social power. Right now, we are being pushed as a collective to evolve by cultivating a sense of internal security and satisfaction that is not attached to the need for achievement or image.

We can understand what may happen when Pluto returns by looking at countries that began long before ours did and have already experienced more than one Pluto return.

Pluto re-visiting is like going into the back of your closet, shining a light, and seeing something long hidden in the shadows or looking around and noticing what used to fit but you have outgrown. Now that you see what you couldn't see before, what does that change? What would you like to experience that looks and feels better than what you have had? Pluto doesn't mince words and it doesn't wait until we've decided we are ready because it has a higher purpose—to get us to the next phase. Pluto knows that the end result of the metamorphosis is a butterfly. It's the same entity completely transformed. The experience our country is going through can be seen as an initiation into a new way of being.

Pluto doesn't mince words and it doesn't wait until we've decided we are ready because it has a higher purpose—to get us to the next phase.

We are living at a pivotal time in history and right now we have front row seats and back stage passes to the show. Whatever happens in the US affects the rest of the world so the dynamic ripples of the Plutonic waves throughout our country will most definitely have an impact globally. We will feel Pluto's energy throughout this year most significantly and on through 2024. With Pluto directing the production it's not an easy time but there is *hope* if we can trust the process. Many great things took place following July 4, 1776, and I believe many great things are yet to come for us.

Catherine Carlson is an astrologer who offers consultations for adults and children. She is an Ann Arbor native who enjoys living locally with her family. She can be reached at catherine-carlson.com or catenka@mac.com

Kashi's World

By Diane Majeske

Ann Arbor Artist Brings Magical, Spiritual Touch to Her Creations

Photo by Robert Adisa Dayo

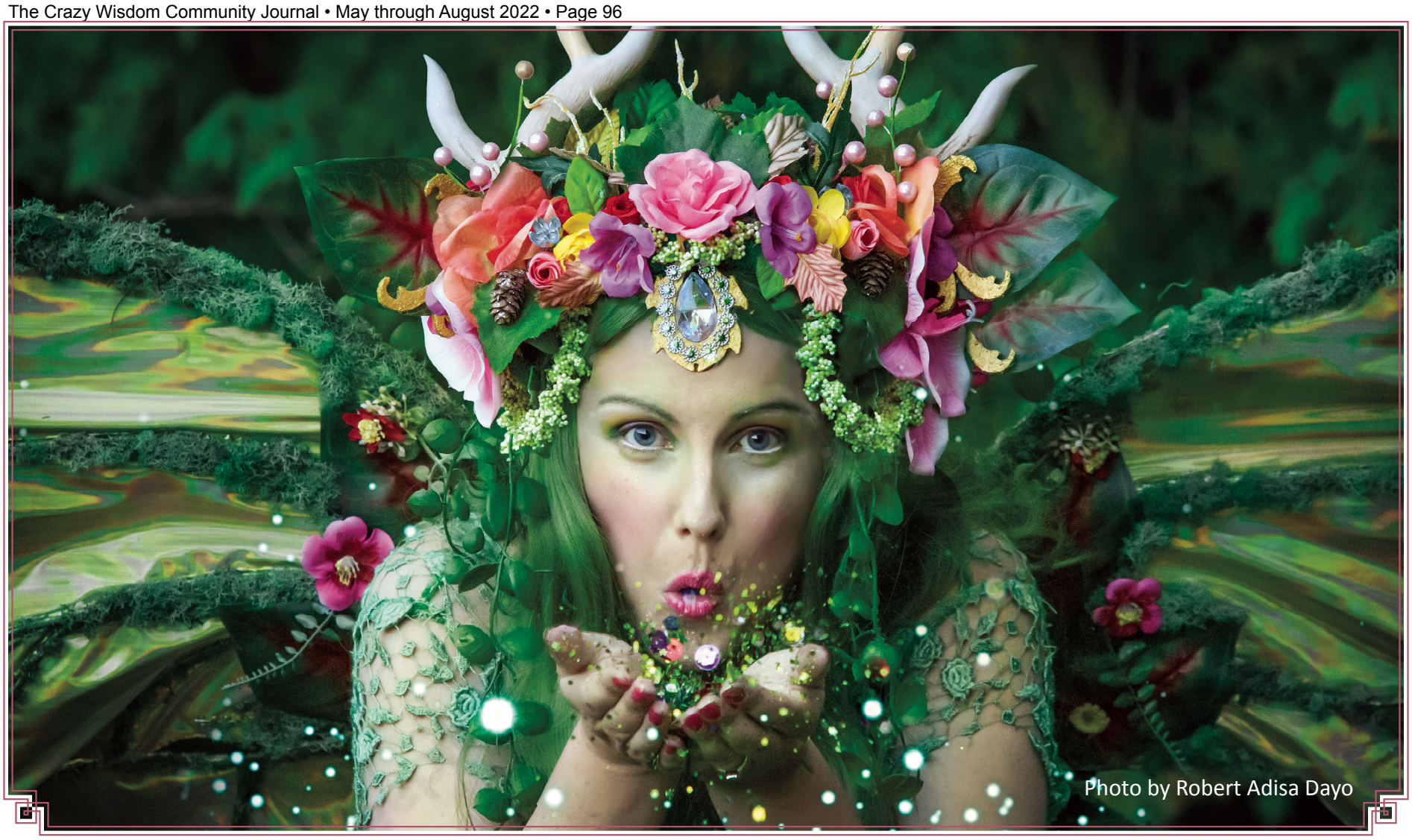


Photo by Robert Adisa Dayo

While many of the Ann Arbor ashram devotional and meditational programs were forced to pause during Covid-19, Walters found her creativity working overtime.

In Kashi's world, there are jewels and feathers, sequins and stars, belts, beads, shiny threads, and smooth shells. There's lace and flowers, a touch of whimsy, a hint of darkness, and a tangible passion for art.

In the midst of it all, there is Kashi Amma Walters, blissfully creating and steadily earning praise for her ornate pieces which run the gamut from jewelry to costumes to headpieces to sculptures.

"I love anything that's magical, mysterious, mythical, and spiritual," says the self-taught artist. "I resonate with my creations—they're not just pretty little things. They bring me to life. They connect me to something bigger than the mundane world. I'm a spiritual person, and a lot of my art reflects that."

For Walters, spirituality is a part of day-to-day life; she and her husband, Swami Atmananda Saraswati, run the Kashi Niva Shivas Meditation Ashram in Ann Arbor. She joined the Ann Arbor community in 2014, arriving from Australia where she had met her soon-to-be husband, and soon felt at home.

In Australia, Walters already had begun following a spiritual path, joining an ashram in her 20s and studying with a variety of spiritual teachers.

"I was always creative in school, but there was a part of me that wanted to be of service to others," says Walters, 42. "I've always done some type of volunteer work. I just never knew how it would work out in my life."

While many of the Ann Arbor ashram devotional and meditational programs were forced to pause during Covid-19, Walters found her creativity working overtime.

Gathering up a few beads and shells one day, she spontaneously decided to design and create a necklace, placing it for sale in the small store in the ashram. To her surprise, the next day a student saw it, fell in love with it, and paid her three times the asking price.

"I absolutely couldn't believe it," she says, laughing. 'I was like, 'Whoa!' And I started making more jewelry."

Art that reflects life

Walters' jewelry is ornate, intricate, gothic in style, and layered in symbolism.

"In many of my pieces, you may see something that is really pretty, like a sequin or stone, but then a tinge of something dark—like a skull," Walters says. "That' s because life is both light and dark, and in human nature there is both light and dark. Art is an expression of life—it's not just one thing: it's a combination. So, you'll see that reflected in my pieces; there is beauty, there is ugliness, there is light and there is darkness."

"The care that Walters puts into each piece she creates is obvious," says Katie Parzych, a friend of Walters who has helped her model jewelry on her Instagram page.

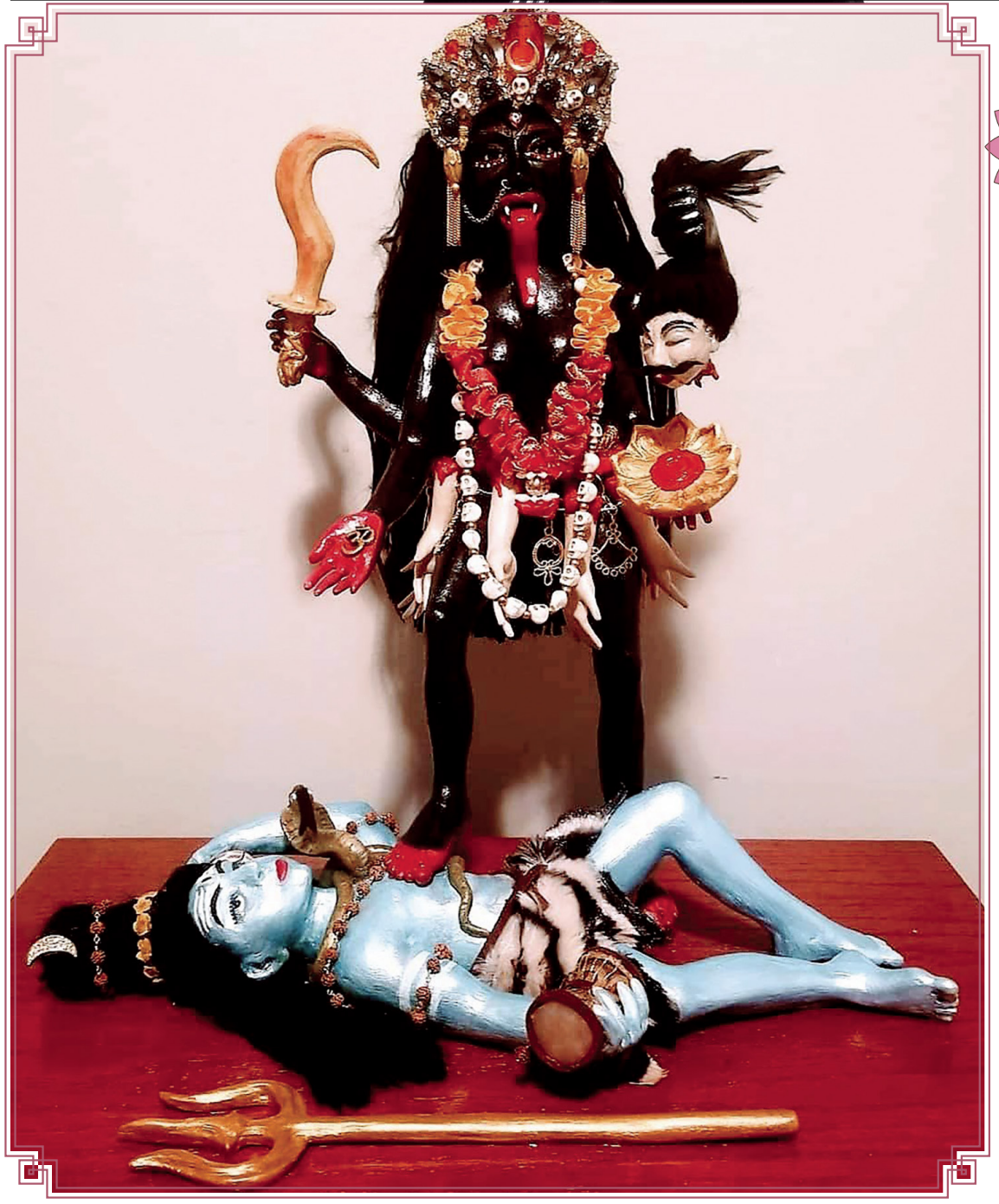
Photo by Jeff Gaydash

"Each piece has such a strong vision," Parzych says. "I'm so just impressed on how every piece has its own personality—they're truly magical. Kashi is such a loving person, and that really comes through in her work."

Parzych has watched her friend evolve from creating jewelry to branching out to other media such as costumes, sculptures, and headdresses. "It's been so exciting for me to watch," she says. "She just seems to excel at every medium she tries."

"Art is an expression of life—it's not just one thing: it's a combination. So, you'll see that reflected in my pieces; there is beauty, there is ugliness, there is light and there is darkness."

—Kashi Amma Walters



Ask Walters, though, and she's far more modest saying it's simply a matter of trial and error, of embracing mistakes, changing plans, and being open to new ideas.

Ask Walters, though, and she's far more modest saying it's simply a matter of trial and error, of embracing mistakes, changing plans, and being open to new ideas.

"I had only been doing jewelry, and a friend wanted me to make her a wall-hanging mask of a Hindu god and I was like, 'I don't sculpt!' But she was like, 'Oh, you can do it,' so I decided to try it—doing a practice one before I tried hers."

Using a polymer clay, she found she reveled in the process of meticulously creating something from nothing, of carving facial features and uncovering the symbols and stories behind the gods and goddesses she was asked to bring to artistic life.

"I simply fell in love with sculpting," Walters says. "There is just something in me that is being driven to create in more and different ways and I'm going to let it be, let it do that. I think there are things in life we need to live out. Instead of pulling away, we need to live it out, live it mindfully and be healthy with it. I think that's the spiritual aspect that comes with art for me."

Susan Thompson, of Dexter, commissioned Walters to create a sculpture of Kali, a Hindu goddess with a rich, complex history. She was thrilled with the result.

The Woodland Fairy is a frothy concoction of lace, flowers, and tulle, with delicate wings, a bustle skirt and an elaborate headdress complete with handmade antlers—Walters' ode to the divine Mother Earth.

Photo by Jeff Gaydash

"It's beautiful; it's actually more than that—it's inspiring," she says. "It's difficult for me to even find words to describe it. I love the way she customized for it for me and placed so many symbols within the sculpture. She puts everything she has into a project, and her passion for art truly comes through."

Art for art's sake

Most of Walters' art pieces are created for others—by commission or for sale through her business, Arcane Expressions. And orders for them have been steadily growing, primarily by word-of-mouth or through her visits to the Ann Arbor artisan market.

Occasionally, though, there's a project that comes to fruition simply because she feels the thrill and the desire to create.

Enter The Woodland Fairy, her most ornate costume yet.

The Woodland Fairy is a frothy concoction of lace, flowers, and tulle, with delicate wings, a bustle skirt and an elaborate headdress complete with handmade antlers—Walters' ode to the divine Mother Earth.

"I created The Woodland Fairy costume during Covid lockdown," she recalls. "Everything was so quiet, and I was starting to connect more deeply to nature. I

"When I'm creating, anything really—the sculpting, the jewelry, the costumes, whatever it is—I'm working within a specific vibration. Each piece has a certain energy and I'm working within that, and I attempt to bring that through into that piece."

—Kashi Amma Walters

would take walks every day, and because it was so quiet, I could just feel nature more. You could see more creatures out and about and I was taking it in, and it was just truly magical."

She was inspired. "I started thinking about the nature spirit, and the divine Mother Earth, and how I could mix that in with the creation of a costume," she says. "It was my expression of connecting with nature and Earth and the fairy elements."

Starting with a wedding gown she found at the Salvation Army and dyed green, she went to work. "It was so fun to make—and it was something just for me. The entire time I was making it, I was connecting with and thinking of nature," she says.

During a recent photo session at the Arb wearing the costume, many people, including children, approached her with questions, compliments, and even invitations to events.

It's a perfect example of how immersed she becomes in each project she takes on. "When I'm creating, anything really—the sculpting, the jewelry, the costumes, whatever it is—I'm working within a specific vibration. Each piece has a certain energy and I'm working within that, and I attempt to bring that through into that piece."

When she creates malas, or prayer beads, her art becomes decidedly spiritual.

"Art can be a spiritual experience and it can be meditative at times, as well," Walters says. "When I create these particular items, I cleanse my space. I do a puja, which is a ritual that connects you to the divine, and I tie each knot with a mantra. They can take up to two hours to make, and I'm in a meditative state during that time, consumed by that and only that. That intention, that mantra, and that vibration is going into that [object] for someone. That's very important for me."

Her style continues to change and develop as she grows as a person.

"I think as I get older, there is more confidence," Walters says. "Also, I have spiritual practices that I do every day—I do yoga, I connect with nature, connect with myself. I know myself better. At this point in my life, this creativity is coming from a very deep place—when someone gets a piece of my art, they're getting a piece of me, for sure."

She hopes everyone can find inspiration through personal expression that makes their life more fulfilling.

"We all have our own energy that comes from within," she says. "It's so important that we find our own thing that lets us express ourselves. We're not one-dimensional beings. Ultimately, we exist beyond the mind and body. We're a soul, and the true self is beyond anything the mind can imagine. Through my artwork, I get to express all these different parts of me, and it's so enjoyable. It's something I want to share."

You can find Walter's art on Instagram @arcaneexpressions, on her Facebook page @Arcane Expressions, or Twisted Things Organic Apothecary and Curious Goods in Ypsilanti, MI. For commissions you can call (734) 883-6947.

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The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

A FREE GUIDE TO LOCAL CLASSES, WORKSHOPS, AND EVENTS

MAY THROUGH AUGUST 2022

Calendar Edited by Michelle McLemore

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

A Course in Miracles Study Group with Rev. David Bell • Mondays, May 2 - August 29 • 6:45 - 9:30 p.m. • Exploration of A Course in Miracles. Free, but donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

A Course in Miracles Study Group with Randall Counts • Thursdays, May 5 - August 25 • 12 - 1:30 p.m. • Exploration of A Course in Miracles. Free, but donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

ANIMALS AND PETS

Basic Animal Communication with Judy Liu Ramsey • May 14 & 15 • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. • Learn to communicate with animals the way animals talk with each other—using telepathic and intuitive skills. We were all born with these abilities. Join us for this eye-opening class and learn from the animals themselves. $160 per person or household. Contact Judy Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net; JudyRamsey.net.

Advanced Animal Communication: The Deepening with Judy Liu Ramsey • August 12-14 • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. • In-person class that will remove any mental blocks to fully communicatw with animals, plants, hidden folk, nature spirits, and all our relations. It is an amazing, magical experience that you will treasure. Pre-requisite: Basic Animal Communication. Suggested reading: *When Animals Speak* by Penelope Smith. $220 per person. Contact Judy Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net; JudyRamsey.net.

AROMATHERAPY AND ESSENTIAL OILS

Creating a Personalized Bath Collection with Karen Greenberg • July 17 • 6-9 p.m. • Choose from a massive collection of essential oils to create your own personalized bath collection to help move you toward your life's purpose for joy, for gratitude, for humility, for courage, for love, for clearing, for energy, for creativity, and for abundance. Special $75 + $50 Materials (Normal Class Rate = $125 + $50 Materials Fee). Contact Karen Greenberg at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

ART AND CRAFT

Art in the Time of Covid with Eight Artists • May 1 - August 28 • Daily 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. • During the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, eight women gathered on Zoom monthly to share their creative work; they found meaning in what was going on and gave expression to those thoughts, feelings, and observations. Artworks include drawing, painting, quilting, journaling, graphic arts, collage, photography, and video production. Free. Contact webercenter.org.

Art & Design, 101, Virtual Zoom class with Nancy Wolfe • 8 Tuesdays • June 7 - July 26 • 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. • Drawing and collage for beginners and to those who want to return to experience the pleasure of making art. $140. Contact nancy@nancywolfe.com or 734-358-5857.

The Ghana Experience with Judith Bemis • June 10-12 • 4 – 8 p.m., June 11, 3 – 6 p.m., June 12: 2 – 5 p.m. • The Ghana Experience featuring paintings from the artist's travels to Ghana, including two new works created for this exhibit. Free. Contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at 248-962-5475 or rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Watershed with University of Michigan Museum of Art • August 4 • 11 a.m. • "Watershed" brings recent work from sixteen contemporary regional, national, and international artists to UMMA for an exhibition that asks visitors to immerse themselves in the interconnected histories, present lives, and imagined futures of the Great Lakes region. Inquire for cost. Contact umma-news@umich.edu.

FUN with University of Michigan Museum of Art • May 14th - September 4 • 11 a.m. • The exhibition will transform before your very eyes as it becomes what you—our community, our students, and our visitors—make of it. Piles of materials and supplies will form the backdrop of a collaborative, summer-long free artists' workshop. A place to create, experiment, glue, paint, and get messy. **Free.** Contact kbeaton@umich.edu or 734-764-7032.

ASTROLOGY

Discover Your Birth Chart with Alicia Clark-Teper • Thursday, May 5 • 7 – 9 p.m. • Your birth date can tell you so much about yourself and the influences that will flow through your life. Learn how to understand your energy patterns better. Knowing this information can help you with your family dynamics, self-acceptance and more. Group class, not personal chart reading. $25. Contact Alicia at 734-945-5396 or clarkteper@yahoo.com.

BODYWORK AND BODYMIND THERAPIES

D.O.V.E. DIVINE ORIGINAL VIBRATION EMBODIMENT System Practitioner Training with Karen Greenberg • Fridays, May 6, 13, 20 or June 10, 17, 24 or July 8, 15, 22 or August 5, 12, 19 • 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. • Repattern client's limiting behaviors, assist client in expressing low-vibrational emotions, institute new behaviors via Tree of Life. $777 (pick any group of three dates above) + materials fee. Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

7 Notes Book Club with Rob Meyer-Kukan • First Thursdays • May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • The purpose is to meet with like-minded people to read books about holistic practices, health, meditation, and spirituality. All participants will be given equal voice and have ample opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Register at forms.gle/GMPWUUfpHnqFW3R2A. Donations accepted. Contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Jewel Heart Readers with Jewel Heart Instructors • Mondays • May 9, June 13, and August 15 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Enjoy lively discussion on monthly Buddhist-related book selections with our community. All are welcome. Free; donations welcome. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

BREATHWORK

Transformational Breath® Experiential Workshops with Julie Wolcott and Marcia Bailey • Saturdays, May 21, July 9, and July 30, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Monday May 16, Wednesday May 25, Thursday June 2, Tuesday June 7, and Friday June 17, 7 - 9 p.m. • Learn the benefits of the Transformational Breath process, set intention, and experience a full session. $30 per review; $40 first time. Contact Julie at 734-355-1671, jlwolcott@ymail.com or Marcia at 734-395-4799, mbaileytm@gmail.com; BreatheAnnArbor.com.

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this Calendar, please look in the section that follows the Calendar, which is called "Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers" and which starts on page 118.

Art by Jennifer Carson

OUR CALENDAR EDITOR'S PICKS OF INTERESTING HAPPENINGS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Compassionate Yoga-Remote classes with Mary Seibert • Wednesdays • 4:15 - 5:30 pm * See Yoga.

Health Yourself Fair with More than a dozen Local Natural Health Providers • Saturday, May 7 • 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. * See Festivals and Fairs.

Help Yourself with Self Hypnosis with Conrad Joseph Welsing Jr. • Tuesdays, June 6, 13 and 20 • 6 p.m. * See Holistic Health.

The Differences Among Us: Seeking Unity in Diversity with Laurie Brink, OP • Tuesday, June 7 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. * See Retreats.

Art & Design, 101, Virtual Zoom class with Nancy Wolfe • Tuesdays: 8 sessions, June 7-July 26 • 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. *See Art and Crafts.

Kindness, Clarity & Insight: An Introduction to Buddhist Practice with Guy Newland • June 18 • 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. * See Buddhism.

Candlelight Labyrinth Walk and Meditation with Ringstar Studio • Saturday, June 25 • 7 p.m. – 11 p.m. * See Meditation.

Ullambana Day Service with Maum Gloria Cox • Sunday, August 14 • Begins 11:30 a.m. * See Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals.

Ayurvedic Marma Chikitsa with Jeannie Faulkne • Saturday & Sunday, September 10 -11 • 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. * See Massage.

BUDDHISM

The Graduated Path in 60 Verses with His Eminence Dagyab Kyabgon Rinpoche • Tuesdays, April 5 through May 31. • 7 - 9 p.m. • The step-by-step path to Buddhahood, these teachings are based on tradition with Dagyab Rinpoche's warmth and wisdom. Each week includes Rinpoche's recorded teaching followed by a facilitated discussion. Suggested $240 members/$300 Non-members. Pay what you can. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times, with Demo Rinpoche • Weekly first Sundays, May 1 - August 28. • 11 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. • A variety of topics that are suitable for newcomers and long-timers alike, followed by a facilitated group discussion based on the morning talk. Rinpoche presents the Jataka Tales, stories from the Buddha's previous lives. Free but donations welcome. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

37 Bodhisattva Practices with Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe • Thursdays • May 5, 12, 19 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • A practical guide for anyone aspiring to follow the path of great compassion leading to full enlightenment. Note: This teaching is a continuation of Thabkhe's 37 Bodhisattva Practices given in 2021. Suggested $75 Jewel Heart members/$90 Non-members. Pay what you can, no one is turned away. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

A Buddha is Born: Free Vesak Day Talk with Demo Rinpoche • May 6 • 7 - 8 p.m. • In Tibet Buddhism, Vesak Day honors the birth, enlightenment, and death of Shakyamuni Buddha. This teaching provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the life of Buddha and to expand our knowledge about how Buddha's journey of enlightenment began. Free, but donations welcome. Contact 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

Exchanging Cherishing Self for Others (Applied Meditation Technology Series) with Hartmut Sagolla and Supa (Greg) Corner • Saturday, May 7 • 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. • Continuing the Applied Meditation Technology series, learn to expand spiritual vision and practices aimed at full enlightenment. Workshops include instruction, guided meditation, individual meditation, and discussion. Suggested $25 Jewel Heart members / $30 Non-members. Pay what you can, no one turned away. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

NIA SPONGBERG is a life coach in Ann Arbor who loves helping people step into their gifts and greatness. Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic she adapted her business by closing down her office space and introducing Walk & Talk sessions as a means of continuing to meet face-to-face with local clients. Getting outdoors provides an important change of scene which can yield fresh perspective, and perspective shift is key to most personal growth. Furthermore, moving our bodies by walking increases circulation, causes more oxygen to reach our brains, and triggers the release of endorphins (happy hormones) that reduce anxiety and stress, thus supporting our brains in being more alert and clear and experiencing more insights. Nia walks with clients at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Nichols Arboretum, Bird Hills, and on various sections of the Border to Border Trail. She also coaches by phone and by Zoom. For more information visit her online at niaspongberg.com.

BUDDHISM, CONTINUED

Nagarjuna's Precious Garland of Advice to a King with Demo Rinpoche • Weekly Thursdays • June 2- July 7 • 7 – 8 p.m. • How to gain happiness, individually and as a society, now and in future lives, and attaining enlightenment through practical ethics, great compassion, and the wisdom of emptiness. A continuation of 2021 Precious Garland teachings. $70 members / $90 Non-Members. Negotiable. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

The Logic of Tantra with His Eminence Dagyab Kyabgon Rinpoche • Saturday, June 4 • 9 - 10:30 am • Buddhist Tantra is the realization of emptiness and the pursuit of the welfare of all beings. The tools of tantra include mantra, mudra, and meditation. It encompasses symbolism as well as the deepest levels of meditation and philosophy. Suggested $55 members/$75 Non-members. Pay what you can. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

Kindness, Clarity & Insight: An Introduction to Buddhist Practice with Guy Newland • Saturday, June 18 • 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. • In Thailand, Tibet, Taiwan, and throughout the world, Buddhist practice means training the mind in ethics, concentration, and wisdom. We will use this framework to introduce Buddhist teachings as a guide to a calmer, more caring way of life. Suggested $80 members/$100 Non-members. Pay what you can. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs.

Tong Len: Courageous Compassion (Applied Meditation Technology Series) with Hartmut Sagolla and Supa (Greg) Corner • Saturday, June 25 • 9 - 1 p.m. • Turning ego's addiction to self-gratification upside down, the practice of giving happiness to others and taking on their suffering transforms our very being. Learn methods to expand the spiritual vision and practices for enlightenment. Suggested $25 members / $30 Non-members. Pay what you can. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

The Transcendental Actions (Applied Meditation Technology Series) with Hartmut Sagolla and Supa (Greg) Corner • Saturday, July 9 • 9 am-1 pm • The venturing awakening mind pro-actively engages life through acts of generosity, ethics, patience, and enthusiasm. Expand the spiritual vision and practices aimed at enlightenment. All workshops include instruction, guided meditation, individual meditation, and discussion. Suggested $25 members/$30 Non-members. Pay what you can. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs.

Sadhana Meditation Practice with Lama Nancy Burks via Zoom • Every Sunday • 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. • Sadhana practice includes chanting and mantra recitation. Medicine Buddha sadhana on the first and third Sunday of the month; Chenrezik/Amitabha sadhana on the second and fourth Sunday. If there is a 5th Sunday, we do silent sitting meditation. Texts are provided and everyone is welcome. Free, but donations welcome. Contact Pat at 734-678-7549 or aaktc@yahoo.com; annarborktc.org.

Meditation and Discussion with Lama Nancy Burks • Every Wednesday • 7 – 8 p.m. • The purpose of the meditation is to provide group practice and discussion that will be meaningful to students at every level. The content of each meeting will be informed by the interests of the participants and will include meditation practice and traditional Buddhist teachings of the Karma Kagyu Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Free, but donations welcome. Contact Pat at 734-678-7549 or aaktc@yahoo.com; annarborktc.org.

Raise your words, not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.

—Rumi

CEREMONIES, CELEBRATIONS, AND RITUALS

Buddha's Birthday with Haju Linda Lundquist • Sunday, May 15 • 9:30 am • Traditional Buddha's birthday service with special chanting, bathing of the baby buddha, and Children's Celebratory Service, special lantern lighting and chanting service. $Donation. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Full Moon Reiki Bonfire Ceremony with Alicia Clark-Teper & Jennifer Kirk • May 15, June 14, July 13, August 11, September 9 • Arrival 6:30 p.m., ceremony is 7 – 10 p.m. • Journey thru the Full Moon, astrological energy, gentle yin yoga, and a Reiki meditation followed by a bonfire, drumming and s'mores. $33 each or 2/$50 bring a friend. Contact Alicia Clark-Teper at 734-945-5396 or sacredlotusexperience@yahoo.com; sacredlotusexperience.com.

Liberation of Life Ceremony with Haju Linda Lundquist • Sunday, June 19 • 10 - 11:10 a.m. • In keeping with the Buddhist Precept "Do not harm, but cherish all life," the Liberation of Life Ceremony celebrates non-human species by releasing beings held in captivity and/or destined for slaughter. Donation. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Summer Solstice with Esther Kennedy, OP • Sunday, June 19 • 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. • Solstice is a time of love and abundance as Earth pours herself out in bud, bloom, and birthing time for her creatures. She is our mother. We must wake up and protect her fragile life systems. We will save only what we love. Come with a poem, or a song, a treat to share and an open heart. Donations appreciated. Contact webercenter.org.

Triple Crane 10 Year Anniversary Celebration with Master Zhone Hai (winnie) • Saturday, July 2 • 10:30 a.m. – 9 p.m. • The day begins with a Blessing and Bell Ringing Ceremony and ends with a talk by Master Sea Cloud via Zoom from the Mother Temple in Taiwan. Enjoy a Traditional Chinese Lion Dance, drumming, Chinese Tea Ceremony, calligraphy, TCRC tours, Kirtain, and Chinese Buddhist chanting. Lunch and buffet dinner served. $By donation to make reservation. Contact Office@TripleCraneRetreat; TripleCraneRetreat.org.

Ullambana Day Service with Maum Gloria Cox • Sunday, August 14 • 11:30 a.m. • Rites and service for the dead to wish them a rightful place among the living and release from suffering in their next rebirth. Prior consultation appointment necessary. $By donation. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

CHANNELING

Remembering Wholeness with The Mother channeled by Barbara Brodsky • Sunday, May 15 • 2 – 5 p.m. • The Mother invites us to experience the deeper truth of ourselves—where we might be stuck and how we can learn to release when held deeply with love. While the Mother speaks briefly to each person, messages will be delivered aloud to the whole group, allowing people to hear what resonates for them. Suggested donation: $10-$25. Contact 477-5848 or om@deepspring.org; deepspring.org.

Evenings with Aaron channeled by Barbara Brodsky • Tuesday, May 17 • 7 – 9 p.m. • A weaving together of the components of The Eden Project (Mediumship, Eden Class, Dharma Path and Vipassana and Pure Awareness Meditation) with elements of practice for daily life. Suggested donation: $10-$35. Contact 477-5848 or om@deepspring.org; deepspring.org.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Youthful Spirits class with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Sundays, May 1 - August 28 • 1 – 2 p.m. • Spiritual classes for young people. Free, but donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

H2W2 - K4K - Happy, Healthy, Wealthy, Wise - Kabbalah for Kids (5th grade & up) with Karen Greenberg • May 1, June 5, July 10, August 21 • 1 – 3 p.m. • Utilizing movement, multi-sensory input, color, and experiential learning, we build self-esteem. We aid in organizational skills, navigating low-vibrational emotions, relationships, setting healthy boundaries. We encourage fostering authentic selves and genius. $50/session for 2-hour class, meets one time/month for about a year. Contact 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

Music & Motion KinderConcerts with The Ann Arbor Symphony • May 12, 13, 14, 16 • 10 - 10:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. • Designed for up to six years old. Celebrate spring & enjoy the music. Families invited to keep a beat, play follow the leader, listen, dance with flowers & scarves, waltz, dance together, listen to a story book, rock to a lullaby while sharing laughter, and hugs. Free. Contact Ann Arbor Symphony at 734.994.4801 or a2so.com for locations.

Music & Motion KinderConcerts with The Ann Arbor Symphony • June 18, 23, 24, 27 • 10 - 10:30 a.m. & 11 - 11:30 a.m. • Designed for up to six years old. Celebrate spring & enjoy the music. Families invited to keep a beat, play follow the leader, listen, dance with flowers & scarves, waltz, dance together, listen to a story book, rock to a lullaby while sharing laughter, and hugs. Free. Contact Ann Arbor Symphony at 734.994.4801 or a2so.com for locations.

Junior/Family Karate with ANN ARBOR YMCA • Monday and Wednesday thru Jun 12, 2023 • 6:30 - 7:15 p.m. • For beginner and intermediate levels. Students learn self-defense and develop balance, fitness, coordination, self-confidence, and discipline through practice of basic techniques and forms. $15-$101. Contact 734-661-8043 or efransen@annarborymca.org; annarborymca.org.

Kids' Classes with Asian Martial Arts Studio • Mondays, 4:30-5:30 pm; Saturdays 12:30-1:30 pm • Class includes basic techniques from several different martial arts. Each art is taught individually within a unified program, exposing students to multiple traditions and principles with an emphasis on history and tradition. $50-87. Family rates available. Contact 734.994.3620 or info@a2amas.com; a2amas.com/contact.php.

Youth Beginners with Ann Arbor Taekwondo • Monday-Thursdays • 5:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. • Many students join the Tae Kwon Do program simply to learn self-defense or to have a fun, interesting workout. Option to participate in local and regional competitions. Division for these matches are based on rank, age, size, and sex. The "Black Belt Club" is a program, which is more intense and competition-oriented than our regular program. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-972-1178; aataekwondo.com.

Youth Intermediate with Ann Arbor Taekwondo • Monday-Thursdays • 6 – 6:45 p.m. • Many students join the Tae Kwon Do program simply to learn self-defense or to have a fun, interesting workout. Option to participate in local and regional competitions. Division for these matches are based on rank, age, size and sex. The "Black Belt Club" is a program, which is more intense and competition-oriented than our regular program. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-972-1178; aataekwondo.com.

Kids' Judo with Japanese Martial Arts Center • Wednesdays • 5 - 6 p.m. • We teach kids in a very carefully developed, thoughtful way. We disguise most of the learning as fun, and we vary the rhythm of class to keep them interested. You'll see how our kids are learning to move well, to pay attention to their instructors, and to love the learning process. First two sessions FREE. Contact 734-720-0330 or info@japanesemartialartscenter.com; japanesemartialartscenter.com.

Deep Spring Center
for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry
Fall Programs
The Eden Project, Classes, Retreats, and Silent Meditation all via Zoom
Join us on our path to living a life of loving kindness with non-harm to all beings. Experience the wisdom and compassion of Aaron, as channeled by our founder and guiding teacher, Barbara Brodsky.
DeepSpring.org | info@deepspring.org | 734.477.5848
Deep Spring Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. See website for details.

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Just look into these eyes....
...you should soon feel an overwhelming sense
to come and visit me and my kitty friends
at the Tiny Lions cat café!
Play with us. Cuddle us. Do yoga with us.
You can even take us home (but don't have to).
Just being near us, your heart rate will slow,
and you'll be filled with joy. Hope to see you soon!
tiny lions
LOUNGE & ADOPTION CENTER
5245 Jackson Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103
tinylions.org 734.661.3530

Kids Dae do Sparring with Ann Arbor Black Belt Academy • Saturdays • 1 – 3 p.m. • Applying the tenants and techniques of Tae Kwon Do, getting the correct amount of exercise, living and eating healthily, and learning to set and obtain your goals is our focus in the kids' classes at A2 Black Belt Academy. $150 per month. Contact 734-545-3002 or a2b2ten@gmail.com; a2blackbelt.com/schedule.

Beginner Family Class with Ann Arbor Black Belt Academy • Wednesdays • 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. • Family classes give you a great opportunity to share in an activity that your child has interest in. While doing so you might just get into the best shape of your life! $150 per month. Contact 734-545-3002 or a2b2ten@gmail.com; a2blackbelt.com/schedule.

DEATH AND DYING

Death Cafe with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth & Rev Annie Kopko • First Tuesdays monthly: May 3, June 7, July 5, August 2 • 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. • An exploration of death and dying. Free, but donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Ann Arbor Death Cafe (Virtual) with Merilynne Ruish • Third Saturdays monthly: May 21, June 18, July 16, August 20 • 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. • All are welcome! Join us for a frank discussion on death, dying, and life. Free. Contact The DyingYear@gmail.com; DeathCafe.com.

ENERGY AND HEALING

Universal Sphere® Intro and Upcoming Classes with Shellie Powers (On-line optional) • Mondays, May 2 - August 29 • 10:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. • Learn about the Universal Sphere, a next-generation modality here to accelerate the connection with your "Highest Potential." The Universal Sphere can stand alone or compliment another modality. In-person and online. Free. Contact Shellie at info@thepowersof.com or 734-926-8423; thepowersof.com.

Qigong/Self-Care Energy Work Basics with Master Wasentha Young • Thursdays, May 5 - August 4 • 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. • The Qigong, self-care techniques you will learn in this class include energy cleanse, meditation, muscle relaxing acu-points, and cultivation of chi that will revitalize your sense of well-being. Best of all, you develop a toolbox of strategies for self-care! $180. Contact 734-741-0695 or info@peacefuldragonschool.com; peacefuldragonschool.com.

Heightening Your Vibration: Alchemy (2 day class) with Karen Greenberg • May 15, 22 • 1:30 - 6 p.m. • Change your vibration from low to a higher vibration, and sustain it using tools including, but not limited to, sacred letters, powerful Archetypes, sacred oils, affirmations, visualization, meditation, prayers that you compose, gratitude, breathing, drumming, movement, music, Holy Geometry, traditions, toning Names of G-D, Archangels, and Masters of Light. $200. Contact Karen Greenberg at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

Healing & Ascension Monthlies with Eve Wilson UCM Master Healer, World Ascension Worker • Thursdays, monthly: May 26, June 23, July 21, August 18, September 15 • 7:30-9:30 p.m. • Healing, ascension work, and spiritual support for life. Help our world to transform smoothly. Learn to live in unity with Higher Self in the new world experience. Recorded. $50 per class, sliding scale possible. Enrolling until May 26. Contact Eve at evew@spiritualhealers.com or 734-780-7635; spiritualhealers.com.

Universal Sphere® Practitioner Certification Training with Shellie Powers • June 12 • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 12 OR July 30, 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. • Learn to work with multi-dimensional frequencies to enhance your human life. Easy to learn, quick to apply with powerful results, this is a next-generation modality to accelerate the connection with your "Highest Potential." Transcend 3D drama and challenges. Designed for energy practitioners ready to expand their practice. $397. Contact Shellie Powers at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

Universal Sphere® Practitioner Certification Training Workshop with Shellie Powers ON-LINE • August 24-25 • 6 – 10 p.m. • Learn to work with multi-dimensional frequencies to enhance your human life. Easy to learn, quick to apply with powerful results, this is a next-generation modality here to accelerate the connection with your "Highest Potential." Transcend 3D drama and challenges. Designed energy practitioners ready to expand their practice. $397. Contact Shellie Powers at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

The Weekly Word for Healing & Ascension with Eve Wilson • Fridays • Inquire for time • Get Eve's cutting-edge information and support for personal, world healing, and ascension. Learn what is happening spiritually and how to respond to it for the best experience during this time of rapid change. Feel the love and support available for you and the confidence you need to succeed. Free! Contact Eve at evew@spiritualhealers.com or 734-780-7635; spiritualhealers.com.

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

Teacher Appreciation Week with Rob Meyer-Kukan & Hannah Kanter • May 1 • 1 – 5 p.m. and 7 - 8:30 p.m. • In celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week and National Teacher Day, we invite you to join us for a day to rejuvenate, relax, and restore. Open to all teachers and others working in education. Free. Contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com

Health Yourself Fair with More than a dozen Local Natural Health Providers • Saturday, May 7 • 10 - 4 p.m. • The first annual fair will showcase providers and community resources that promote natural approaches for optimum wellness. The fair will take place at Accelerate Church, 6075 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor, MI. Free. Contact Barbara Bowman at 734-977-1266; diy-wellness.info.

TARA BETH COUMOUNDOUROS holds a doctorate in pharmacy and teaches yoga, hosts women's circles, healing classes and more online and through her sanctuary, Mystic She Ways, an apothecary and yoga space in Adrian,MI. You can contact her online at mysticsheways.com. See her article Tending the Divine Feminine Flame in the CW Biweekly Issue #81 at crazywisdomjournal.com/biweekly-81.

Triple Crane Retreat Center Summer Community Gathering with multiple presenters • Friday, August 12, 4:30 p.m. - Sunday, August 14 7:30 p.m. • Enjoy two days of yoga, meditation, kids' yoga, ecstatic dance meditation, kirtan, and more. Chant and dance together, explore topics on sustainability, and enjoy a feast of vegetarian food, all while cultivating community in a family friendly environment. cost TBD. Contact Office@TripleCraneRetreat.org; TripleCraneRetreat.org.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Teacher Appreciation Day with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Sunday, May 1 • 1 - 5 p.m.; 7 - 8:30 p.m. • In celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week and National Teacher Day, we invite you to join us for a day to rejuvenate, relax, and restore. Free. Contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com and facebook.com/events/204555025188664.

10th Annual Drum and Dance Jam with Curtis G. • First Saturday monthly • 7:30 p.m. • 18 and over welcome. No experience necessary. Bring a drum of your own, or use one provided at the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth. $5 Sliding donation at door. Contact interfaithspirit.org.

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Spring Reset: Yoga, Meditation & Health with Ema Stefanova • April 16-17 • Sat. 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. and Sunday 1 - 5 p.m. • Yoga is a science of consciousness, personality, and creativity. This 2-day seminar will help train your willpower to transform your life. Excellent for beginners and pros. Teachers earn Continuing Education Credit with the Yoga Alliance. Inquire for cost. Contact EmaStefanova@cs.com or 734-665-7801; YogaAndMeditation.com.

Help Yourself with Self Hypnosis with Conrad Joseph Welsing, Jr. • June 6, 13 and 20 • 6 p.m. • Do you want to understand more about the science behind hypnosis and learn the techniques to engage the mind, body, and emotion? You will learn about research from academic sources as well as popular practitioners to support your practice. $59. Contact Washtenaw Community College at 734-677-5060 or to register online: wccnet.edu/noncredit.

INTUITIVE AND PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

Focused Mind Meditation with John Friedlander • First Sundays monthly: May 1, June 5, July 3, August 7 • 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. • Development of sustained focused meditation makes it easy to develop a whole new magnitude of psychic skill and healing ability, as well as a whole new level of mental clarity and spiritual openness. $15. Contact Violeta Viviano at 734-476-1513 or mvaviviano@gmail.com; psychicpsychology.org.

Psychic Psychology Women's Group with John Friedlander and Gloria Hemsher • First Tuesdays monthly: May 3, June 7, July 5, August 2 • 7-8 p.m. • For Women Only. Meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies as well as that of the aura. $10. Contact Violeta Viviano at 734-476-1513 or mvaviviano@gmail.com; psychicpsychology.org.

Summer 2022 Intensive Webinar/Teleconference with John Friedlander • Thursday, July 21, 7-9 p.m., Friday, July 22, 7-9 p.m., Saturday, July 23, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., 2-4 p.m., Sunday, 24, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., 2-4pm • New material introduced with continued development of advanced material and core techniques seeking a natural sense of skills in a practical everyday life. Prerequisite Level 1 Psychic Development class, CD set or permission of instructor. $275 (or see website). Contact Gilbert Choudury at gchoud@yahoo.com; psychicpsychology.org.

KABBALAH

Kabbalah for Couples with Karen Greenberg • Sundays monthly: May 1, June 5, July 10, August 21 • 3-5 p.m. • This is for good relationships in which all want to make better. This two-hour session, for about a year, is not couples therapy, but can help you get your relationship to the place that you always wanted it to be but did not know how. $274 per session. Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

Brand New Beginning Kabbalah: Kabbalah Miracles with Karen Greenberg • May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10 8:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. OR Evenings May 10, June 14, July 12, August 9, 7:30-9:30 p.m. • Balance the important areas of life. Rather than resisting, we utilize that liberated energy for creating. Monthly Rate - $137/person; Monthly Semi-Private (2 people) $180/person; Monthly Private (1 person) $150/hour (based on time utilized). Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Creating Your Ideal Mate with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, May 1 • 5-10 p.m. • Identify your Ideal Mate's qualities, learning how to use ceremony, meditation, chanting, movement, fragrances, essences, elixirs, herbs, flowers, colors, shapes, metals, altars with sacred symbols, Archetypal images, and candles. Learn to work to remove blockages, to work through fears and "deserving" issues, and to trust the Divine Order and Timing. $150. Contact Karen Greenberg at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

MASSAGE

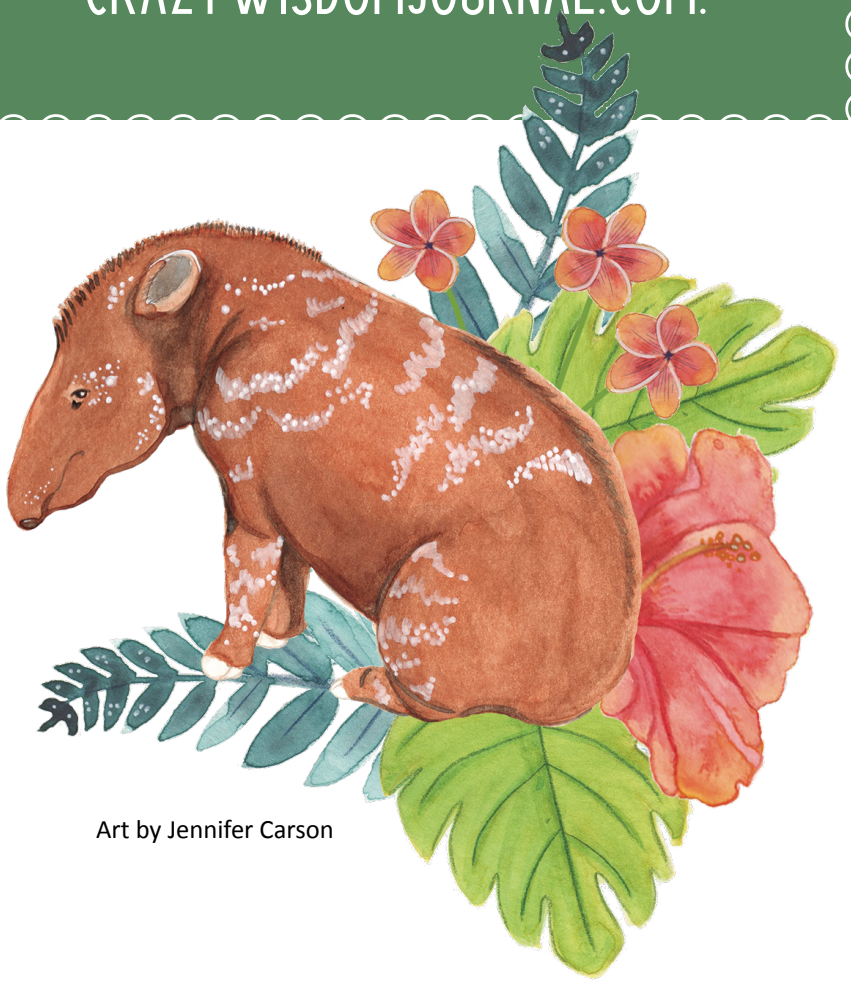
Bamboo Fusion with Stacey Vipond • Saturday-Sunday, May 14 - 15 • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. • Use gently-heated bamboo tools for kneading tight muscles and rolling out muscle tension. Bamboo-Fusion is an innovative way to provide Swedish or deep tissue full body massage on the table while reducing the stress on your hands. You will learn a new way to give effleurage and petrissage with warm bamboo of different shapes and sizes in the hand. $450. Contact lakewoodschool.edu.

Fascial Therapy with Beth Ashcraft • Saturday – Sunday, May 21 & 22 • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. • This therapy stretches the fascia and can be used anywhere there are fascial restrictions. The goal of this work is to reduce restrictions, so the tissues and joints to move better, and there are fewer structural dysfunctions and imbalances. Students will learn specific releases, diaphragm holds, cross arm technique, lumbosacral decompression, and dural tube mobilization. $265. Contact lakewoodschool.edu.

Orthopedic Massage - Lower Body with Rob Kelly • June 4 - 5 • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. • Students will learn to assess and treat dysfunction/pain in the mid and low-back, along with the hip, knee, and ankle regions. Treatments for specific conditions such as limited range of motion, sciatica, piriformis syndrome, psoas, and sacroiliac dysfunction will be taught. Specific techniques include muscle firing patterns, fascial mobilization, muscle stripping, pin and stretch, and trigger-point approaches. $265. Contact lakewoodschool.edu.

CURATIVE MAGIC
A Witch's Guide to Self Discovery, Care & Healing
RACHEL PATTERSON
Natural Magic for Healing in Heart, Spirit & Soul
Available at shopcrazywisdom.com

ON MAY 1, 2022, THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL WILL BE AVAILBLE ON OUR WEBSITE: CRAZYWISDOMJOURNAL.COM.



Art by Jennifer Carson

Book Review

The Rumi Prescription: How an Ancient Mystic Poet Changed My Modern Manic Life

By Melody Moezzi

By Christine MacIntyre

Melody Moezzi's *The Rumi Prescription: How an Ancient Mystic Poet Changed My Modern Manic Life* is a candid narrative following Moezzi's quest as an Iranian-American writer and activist. Her quest is relatable across time and space, as she learns to embrace and make the most of life. Her journey transpires with the guidance and influence of her father, Ahmad Moezzi, and ancient poet Rumi, whose advice "transcends language, culture, race, and religion."

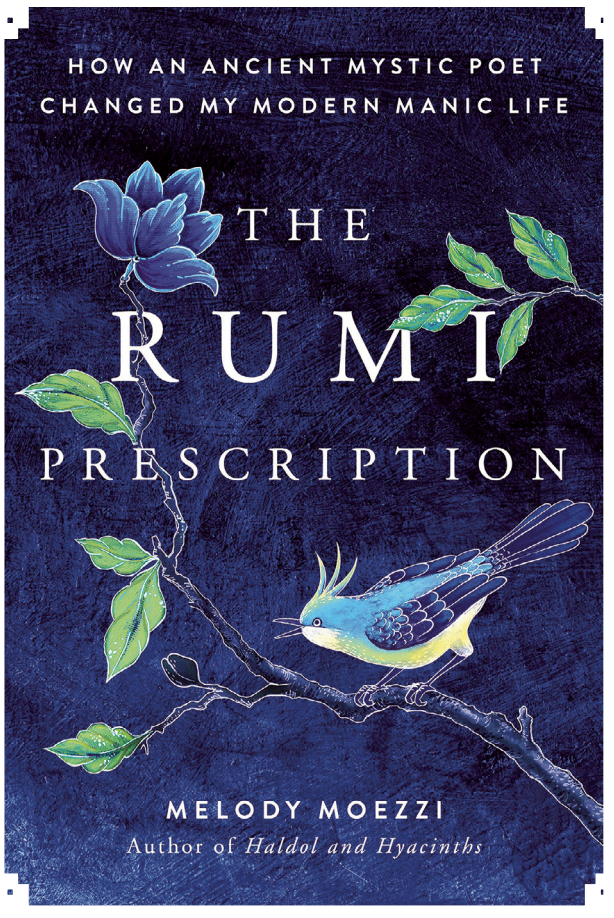
Layered with her personal experiences with bipolar disorder, discrimination, triumphs, and setbacks, she intersperses the literary work with wise and honest ruminations on religion, public health, politics, and culture.

The 13th-century Persian poet's writings are woven into each chapter of both the book and her life, as she utilizes her father's deep understanding of these inspiring and deceptively simple poems that are simultaneously mystical and practical.

Moezzi describes Rumi's poetry as "full of allegory, commentary, wordplay, and copious literary and Quranic allusions." Yet, while the concepts flew over her head as a child, Moezzi embraced Rumi as an adult—approaching the task "with all the love, courage, humor, and humility it demanded."

The beautifully written prose is deeply personal, as Moezzi seemingly reveals her authentic self to readers, offering a narrative for how she uses Rumi's ancient words as a lifeline as she navigates life. The book embeds lessons and food for thought about family, anger, anxiety, distraction, isolation and is more than a memoir, spiritual journey, or collection of poetry. Through this captivating read, it is obvious how she gains wisdom and insight in the face of creative and spiritual roadblocks.

Moezzi leaves no question to readers about the difficulty of her journey—navigating through tears, moments of intense anger, fear, and frustration. Additionally, she avoids sugarcoating the nitty-gritty truth to preserve readers' levels of comfort. The sheer honesty and vulnerability embedded within the text are refreshing, if not comforting, for those of us who can relate on some level. And we all can, as her experiences encompass a wide array of positive and negative emotions, reactions, and outcomes.



Born in the United States after her Persian parents left Iran in the face of a "brewing so-called Iranian Revolution," Moezzi grew up in a sizable, tightly knit Iranian-American community nestled in Dayton, Ohio, with her sister, Romana, and their parents. She learned to speak Farsi through weekly Persian lessons and summers in Tehran, albeit her fluency leaves something to be desired. Her father, "fluent in both modern Farsi and Rumi's medieval variety," routinely recited Rumi's poetry, translating when necessary.

"Intimately acquainted with a wide variety of pain," Moezzi discusses her early adulthood struggles, including a rare pancreatic tumor, myriad medical hospitalizations, chronic pain, major surgery, and then-undiagnosed and untreated manic depression. Finally, a suicide attempt and inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations left her stripped to a bare minimum, with one goal left: survive.

At 35 years old, when she writes *The Rumi Prescription*, Moezzi describes how she learned to reign herself in, focusing on processing her surroundings and herself within them. While her experiences still proved imperfect, as she combated stigma, discrimination, and her self-doubt from time to time, she describes turning to her parents, particularly her father, for clarity and guidance.

She sets off on a pilgrimage, both spiritual and geographical, as she lands in San Diego, where her parents relocated. With Ahmad's expertise, she is guided through a "lyrical world, full of powerful prescriptions for even the most seemingly modern human dilemmas" as she seeks out the "bandage that lets through the Light."

Her father, "a physician by trade and a connoisseur of Sufi poetry by tradition," serves as both friend and mentor, prescribing Rumi' prescriptions'—or, as Moezzi refers to them, "sacred remedies, reminders of my roots, connections to my Source."

Rumi intersperses his ruminations on fatherhood, feminism, and self-care, creating surprising and life-changing insights. Moezzi utilizes the poems consistently throughout the book, stating, "I faced all of the diagnoses and applied all of the prescriptions that follow." Therefore, the book is organized "largely chronologically and in the order of every diagnosis (Dx) and prescription (Rx) that propelled [her] journey forward."

Her writing is practical enough for the average person to understand and, perhaps even apply the concepts rooted within it to their own lives. Her overall tone throughout is thoughtful yet raw, as she articulates her journey toward self-discovery—her metamorphosis—as being "manic and mystical, scary and sublime." Taking readers through specific scenarios, including those both disastrous and triumphant, she provides insights into the messiness of her journey.

The book feels neither preachy nor like a typical self-help book; instead, it feels like reading the diary of a long-time friend. A friend who only wants to help others see that if she can overcome and rise above, so can you, albeit messily and sometimes painfully.

Moezzi's father is present through every one of her perceived failures, believing in her, cheering her on, and teaching her new perspectives based on Rumi's poetic musings. His unwavering support demonstrates the power of having someone or something to believe in and who believes in you. She reflects, "For only looking back can I begin to grasp the powerful role my father's treasured poems have always played in my life."

Moezzi's experiences include numerous public speaking panels, suffering the loss of a friend who succumbed to the potentially fatal symptoms of bipolar disorder and participating in several protests. In addition, her life held witness to countless acts of bigotry, bias, and racism.

Amid widespread hatred and chaos consuming much of the world, Moezzi learns to seek sustenance within herself. She gradually recognizes that by refreshing her perspective and becoming aware and mindful of everything outside of herself, she can minimize distraction and facilitate connection. Any reader can easily relate to her as she describes living in a world full of distraction that insists we look outward. The Rx: turn to the treasures within you, as each of us is already whole.

Moezzi's powerful story attests to the notion that "recovery is possible, that medication works, that faith works, that love works, and that having an atypical brain can be as much an asset as a liability." She mentions telling this to her students often, noting that being surrounded by people who "understand what it's like to lose your mind and find your soul" is what allowed her to see her purpose and find her community.

She dutifully concludes that the remedies to our problems aren't merely a prescription we can "…fill once and be cured," as she states, "I need regular refills because I'm human…." Human nature compels us to insist upon constant reminders; therefore, a support system is vital, as shown through her story.

Through her eloquent yet idiomatic text, she invites readers to quit sleepwalking through life—"to wake up and appreciate what's right in front of [us], and to live in the present."

As Rumi states, "Why seek pilgrimage at some distant shore, when the Beloved is right next door?" Moezzi's *The Rumi Prescription* makes the notion believable, filling readers with the hope that they, too, can find this sense of peace and self-acceptance, though perhaps not in the same way or through the same path.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

MASSAGE CONTINUED

Ayurvedic Marma Chikitsa with Jeannie Faulkne • Saturday – Sunday, September 10 - 11 • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. • An Ayurveda treatment, focusing on the 107 specific points in the body, each of which has a specific property for healing. Identify and work with several of these points and learn tools to relieve muscle tension, rejuvenate and nourish the systems through therapeutic bodywork, ayurvedic oils, and essential oils. $450. Contact lakewoodschool.edu.

MEDITATION

Introductory Meditation Course, 5 Thursdays with Maum Gloria Cox • Thursday, April 28 • 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. • The viewpoint of Zen is that life lived fully in each moment, is the end and purpose in itself, and not the means for something else. Held in the Temple's meditation hall, the course includes simple stretching exercises, work with the breath, meditation postures, concentration, and mindfulness practice Cost is $160/$120 unwaged. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Meditation Outdoors Everyone with Ema Stefanova • Saturday-Sunday, April 30 - May 1 • Sat. 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. and Sun. 1 - 5 p.m. • Weather permitting we will hold this 2-day seminar in the park. Beginners and all level students are welcome to join. Meditation has become necessity. You will learn how to successfully meditate any place, any time. Inquire for cost. Contact EmaStefanova@cs.com or 734-665-7801; YogaAndMeditation.com.

Myriad of Meditations (7 classes in the series) with Karen Greenberg • Sundays • May 1, 15, 22, June 5, 26, July 10, 17 • 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. • Learn a myriad of techniques, to discover which resonate for you: meditations with fire, water, air, earth, the Four Worlds, different breathing, Holy Geometry, sacred letters, Archetypes, spiritual beings, qualities of G-D, and more. $25 per class. Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Weekly Sundays • May 1 - August 28. • 9:30 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. • Tara is the mother goddess of Tibetan Buddhism, known for her quick and compassionate activity. White Tara is particularly associated with healing and long life. These guided meditations use visualization techniques to overcome physical, mental, and emotional suffering. Free/Donations welcome. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Weekly Mondays • May 2 - August 29. No class July 11, 18, and July 25. • 12 - 1 p.m. • A 30-40-minute guided meditation on a Buddhist theme followed by discussion. Meditations are centered around healing oneself and others and developing compassion. They include concentrated meditation, visualization, and contemplative meditations. Free/Donations welcome. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

Putting Out the Nervous System's Fire: Meditations for Coping in Crisis with Amy Hertz • Weekly Fridays • May 6 - August 26. No class May 27, July 15. • 4 - 5 p.m. • Settling the mind is tough in the best of times. Using the breath, writing exercises, and guided meditations, we'll explore ways to calm the body's threat response and regain balance. Free/Donations welcome. Contact Jewel Heart at 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

World Labyrinth Day with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, May 7 • 1 p.m. • Join Veriditas-trained Labyrinth Facilitator, Rob Meyer-Kukan at Webster United Church of Christ, Dexter, Michigan for a labyrinth walk on World Labyrinth Day! Donations to support the work of Webster UCC. Please register for this event by completing the form found here: forms.gle/TvSCV3dmuu6X1bdm9. Contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Day of Mindfulness - Living in Gratitude with Esther Kennedy, OP • Saturday, May 7 • 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. • What else is there, really? Each day, a new twenty-four hours of life. In your life you may not feel well, you may be very ill and dying, you may be lonely, unsure, and scared but just remember, you are alive: No more is asked of you. Be here, be awake, be grateful. $25. Contact webercenter.org.

Peace Generator with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Third Fridays • May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19 • 7 – 9 p.m. • Meditate, sing, dance, juggle—whatever you like to generate peace and harmony on for the planet. Come and go as you please. Free/donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Wheels that Drive You: Chakra Meditation for Total Health with Ema Stefanova • Saturday-Sunday, May 21-22 • Sat. 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. and Sun. 1 - 5 p.m. • The focus is on how each chakra governs specific functions in the body-mind complex, and how to live a healthy, balanced lifestyle informed by meditating on the chakras. Teachers earn continuing education credit with the Yoga Alliance. Inquire for cost. Contact EmaStefanova@cs.com or 734-665-7801; YogaAndMeditation.com.

Day of Mindfulness - Living in Presence with Esther Kennedy, OP • Saturday, June 4 • 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. • Your very presence is who you are. Every moment you are awake to who you are is a holy moment. Come to know your own presence and how you be in the world and how you live in your own skin. What causes you to live in or to lose presence? Living from our fuller presence can bring us joy and help heal our wounded world. $25. Contact webercenter.org.

Beyond Distraction: Five Practical Ways to Focus the Mind with Shaila Catherine ON-LINE • Sunday, June 5 • 10 - 11:30 am • Open to all meditators on the occasion of publication of Catherine's new book, *Beyond Distraction: Five Practical Ways to Focus the Mind*. She will share her teachings and insights including how to overcome distraction in meditation practice and develop clarity in relationships, work, and daily life. Free. Contact stillmountainmeditation.org/events/sunday-meditation-shaila-catherine-2022-06-05.

Candlelight Labyrinth Walk and Meditation with Ringstar Studio • Saturday, June 25 • 7 – 11 p.m. • Walking the labyrinth is a form of moving meditation. Our indoor labyrinth of more than two hundred candles offers a chance to pause and enjoy the glittering stillness within. Free. Contact Ringstar Studio at 734-335-1625 or mail@a2ringstar.com; a2ringstar.com.

Day of Mindfulness—Healing into Wholeness with Esther Kennedy, OP • Saturday, July 9 • 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. • For Parker Palmer writer, teacher, and activist; wholeness does not mean perfection: it means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life. When awareness dawns, the journey to be freely yourself, sharing your ideas, gifts, and goodness begins. You sense a dawning wholeness and wellbeing that you and our world yearns for. $25. Contact webercenter.org.

Training Institute Teaching Mindfulness Skills for Youth with Rita Benn, Kristin Ervin • Monday-Wednesday • August 8, 9, 10 • 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. • This 2-day training for professionals working with youth who have a practice with mindfulness. Those new to mindfulness are invited to register for the introductory one-day pre-institute program. Professionals will gain skill in adapting mindfulness instructions and activities for youth. $295 - $345 before July 1; $335 - 390 after July 1. Contact info@mc4me.org; mc4me.org.

Day of Mindfulness—To Be So Generous with Esther Kennedy, OP • Saturday, August 13 • 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. • This understanding of love and generosity is gentle work. It comes from an awakened heart. It frees us from attachments and is the basis of such good qualities as kindness, sacrifice, mercy, and forgiveness. Generosity is such a living force that helps us release and let go into profound Freedom. $25. Contact webercenter.org.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

MEDITATION CONTINUED

Mantras, Mudras & Meditation with Katherine Austin Wooley • Saturday, August 20 • 1 - 6 p.m. • Explore energetic practices that alter consciousness and address specific human issues/common experiences (hunger, obsession, lack of self-esteem, anxiety, depression, ego.) Help Free yourself from ancestral patterns and support the human stresses of living in today's world. $150. Contact nancy@karma-yoga.net; karma-yoga.net.

Chakra meditation and Sunday Services with Lighthouse Center staff • Sundays weekly beginning **April 3 • 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. •** Chakra meditation (10 minutes on each chakra) and Sunday Service. Free. Contact 734-808-1335.

Sunday Meditation Services with Haju Sunim • Sundays weekly. • 10 - 11:30 a.m. and 4 - 5:30 p.m. • Morning meditation service consists of two periods of meditation followed by chanting and a talk. Afternoon dharma service has two shorter periods of sitting meditation, sometimes walking meditation, reflection, chanting, and a short talk. By donation. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Zazen (meditation) with Huron Valley Aikikai • Tuesdays & Thursdays weekly • 7:30 - 8 a.m. • Masks required when non-vaccinated participants are present. Bring your own mask. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-761-6012; hv-aikido.com.

Yoga and Meditation Facebook Live in English with Trevor Chaitanya Eller ON-LINE• Fridays weekly • 12 – 1 p.m. • This Facebook Live class is taught in English and begins with 30 minutes of yoga asana and breath work or traditional Chinese exercises, followed by 30 minutes sitting meditation. By donation. Contact Office@TripleCraneRetreat.org; TripleCraneRetreat.org.

Movement and Meditation Facebook Live in Chinese with Master Zhong Hai (Winnie) ON-LINE • Saturdays weekly • 9 – 10 a.m. • This Facebook Live class begins with 30 minutes of traditional Chinese exercises or yoga followed by 30 minutes of sitting meditation. The class will be taught in Chinese. By Donation. No registration required. Contact Office@TripleCraneRetreat.org; TripleCraneRetreat.org.

MOVEMENT AND DANCE

Ann Arbor - Toledo Dances of Universal Peace on Zoom with Judy Lee Nur-un-nisa Trautman, Drake Moses Meadow Drake ON-LINE • First Fridays • May 6 – August 5 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Sacred dances to the mantras of the World Religions with simple folk movements. Get link or news of in person events from jltrautman@sbcglobal.net. Free on Zoom; $5 donation if a space rental is needed. Contact Judy Trautman at jltrautman@sbcglobal.net or 419 475 6535; sites.google.com/view/a2-toledodup; facebook.com/dupannarbortoledo/.

MUSIC, SOUND, AND VOICE

Journey Through Sound with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, May 7 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • The first Saturday in May every year is World Labyrinth Day. A labyrinth is a powerful journey of inward reflection which often brings about clarity, calmness, and centeredness. This sound bath will allow you to journey through sound to a place of rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation. $40 Advanced Registration Required at forms.gle/kRStQJ7FKA55iRTm7. Registration May 6. $40. Contact Rob at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Benefit for Refugees Fleeing Ukraine with Tret Fure • Saturday, May 21 • 7 - 9 p.m. • At the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor. Free, but asking donations for refugees fleeing Ukraine. Contact communications@uuaa.org; uuaa.org.

Aroma + Sound: Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, June 11 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Sound elicits relaxation and calm. Scent can be equally as powerful. Participants will be treated to a relaxing sound bath of instruments from singing bowls to gongs and then some. Those gathered will also receive several essential oil samples to utilize throughout the experience. $40 advanced registration required. Registration closes June 10. $40. Contact Rob at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, July 9 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • In this focused time of sound bath meditation we will explore themes of oneness. $40 advanced registration required at forms.gle/zkLjvHGodeneyxHr8. Please note that registration closes on July 8. $40. Contact Rob at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Sound Therapy Workshop with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, August 20 • 2 - 5 p.m. & 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Participants will learn the basics of sound, the history of sound therapy, the tools used in sound therapy (specifically Himalayan singing bowls, crystal bowls, and gongs), and the applications for group and individual use of sound therapy. Hands on experience available. Contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Ever Changing: Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, August 20 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • We will visit affirmations and readings from Louise Hay's book, *You Can Heal Your Life,* coupled with sacred sound of singing bowls, gongs, and more! $40 advanced registration required at forms.gle/VRDRNeiWRZh2qc2c8. Registration closes August 19. $40. Contact Rob at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Singing for Comfort with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Second Thursdays • May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11. • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Raising our voices in song for comfort and peace. Free, but donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Cafe 704 featuring Spirit Singing Band • Saturday, May 14 • 7 – 9 p.m. • music and song at Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth. $10 per ticket. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Sound Bath: crystal bowls concert with Lighthouse Center and John Steinbauer • Third Fridays monthly • May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19 • 7 – 9 p.m. • Crystal bowls concert "Sound Bath." $20. Contact 734-808-1335; lighthousecenterinc.org.

Cafe 704 featuring Marlena Studer and Steve Ragsdale • Second Saturday, June 11 • 7 – 9 p.m. • Musical performance at Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth. $10 per ticket. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

They tried to bury us.
They didn't know we were seeds.

—Mexican Proverb

Creating Your Personal Truth from Core Voice with Dr. Gretchen Snell, Kate Hart, and Karen Greenberg • Sunday, June 12 • 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. • Comprehend/experience profound healing power of nature through vibrational medicine. Connect to the most powerful healing instrument: your core voice, while experiencing group healing with Kate's unique, trademarked therapeutic modality, "Sayonic Music." Greenberg adds toning from the Tree of Life. $99. Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

Cafe 704 featuring David Mosher • Saturday, July 9 • 7 – 9 p.m. • Concert at Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth. $10. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Cafe 704 featuring Matt Watroba • Second Saturday, August 13 • 7 – 9 p.m. • Concert at Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth. $10. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

PERSONAL GROWTH

HeartMath® Building Personal Resilience™ with Patricia Scott • Sundays, April 24, May 1 • 4 - 6 p.m. • This is a focused and practical program, combining personalized coaching with scientifically validated tools to help you self-regulate your body's response to stress and build resilience. You will learn life-long skills that you can use at any time to increase well-being, personal and professional performance, and quality of life experience. Part 1: Empowering Heart. $99. Contact nancy@karma-yoga.net; karma-yoga.net.

HeartMath® Building Personal Resilience™ with Patricia Scott • Saturday-Sunday, May 21, 22 • 4 - 6 p.m. • This a focused and practical program, combining personalized coaching with scientifically validated tools to help you self-regulate your body's response to stress and build resilience. You will learn life-long skills that you can use at any time to increase well-being, personal and professional performance, and quality of life experience. Part 2: Deepening your Practice. $99. Contact nancy@karma-yoga.net; karma-yoga.net.

Cohousing Tours with Cohousing Tour Leaders • Sundays weekly • May 1-August 28 • 2- 4 p.m. • An informative tour of Ann Arbor's three cohousing communities by residents, located in Scio township. Cohousing is a community of friends who work, share, learn, grow, and play together. We are three communities created and sustained by our residents with the intention of sharing the joys and challenges of life. Free. Contact Tours@Touchstonecohousing.org or 734-274-9110.

RONDA PRETZLAFF DIEGEL, Ph.D., LP, E-RYT-500, is a clinical psychologist, yoga/meditation teacher, Enneagram teacher, and popular workshop presenter. She co-founded the Michigan Enneagram Center and continues to be the center's leading Enneagram teacher. To met the needs of her community during the pandemic, Ronda increased her clinical practice and began offering monthly Enneagram meetings on Zoom. Much to her surprise, people from all over the continent began to attend those meetings and, even as in-person gatherings have resumed, she has continued to hold Michigan Enneagram Center meetings on Zoom. Commerce Township is home to both her clinical psychology practice and yoga teaching. She may be reached at drrondadiegel@comcast.net or (248) 730.0597.

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Wonder-twinning™:

ACTIVATING HEALING THROUGH FAITH AND ENERGY

By Christine Tory

In 2017, Vicky Lovell and Danielle Groth crossed paths for the first time. They met during milestone transitions in both of their lives. Lovell was graduating from seminary and answering her first call into ordained ministry and Groth was recovering from breast cancer and in the midst of her own healing. It was a friendship, built on the foundation of their faith, that took time to grow.

The two women approached their faith from different angles, however, it was in that difference that beautiful conversations were shared. They were told they were twin flames, and one was the yin while the other the yang. Their differences proved to be complementary, and their strong bond continues to be a frequency felt by anyone who spends time with them.

THE TWO WOMEN APPROACHED THEIR FAITH FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES, HOWEVER, IT WAS IN THAT DIFFERENCE THAT BEAUTIFUL CONVERSATIONS WERE SHARED.

It all began one Sunday morning after Groth listened to Lovell preach. Groth boldly approached Lovell and said these now famous words, “You do a great job of teaching us how to love God and our neighbor, but when do you teach us how to love ourselves?” When Groth realized she stumped Lovell with that question, she offered to meet with her weekly to share Reiki. Lovell had no idea what she was agreeing to, but she said yes, and soon became the recipient of a weekly dose of divine love through the hands of her new friend. At the end of every session the pastor and the energy medicine practitioner would spend time chatting about what each experienced and both became enthralled with the experiences they were sharing.

During that time Lovell was caring for a woman who was near the end of life. She invited Lovell to visit her in the hospital to pray, but she asked if Lovell would bring her “Reiki friend” with her as well. The two women gathered around the bedside of this dying woman and while Lovell prayed and held the space sacred, Groth offered her Reiki. The three women agreed that when their collective energies united, something unbelievable occurred. The woman felt the presence of God in a new, indescribable way. She died peacefully a few weeks later, filled with hope, and gave the credit to what she encountered in that hospital room. Danielle Groth and Vicky Lovell began to sense that they were on to something by blending faith with energy medicine.

In early 2020, Lovell and Groth shared a life changing spiritual experience at a shrine in Grass Lake, Michigan that they believe catapulted their mission, and shared ministry, into a new phase. It was in that holy space they felt their energies merge. It took their faith to a new depth and gave them the holy nudge that they needed to bravely pioneer into the unknown territory of blending energy medicine and mindfulness with faith into something they call Wonder-twinning. However, before they could step into that calling with both feet, they each needed to reconcile their own faith beliefs with Reiki. Many challenged them. Some said they were devil worshiping, while others said they were getting too “woo-woo.” They needed to know for themselves that what they were dabbling in aligned with their faith convictions.

They dove into scripture, spent time in meditation and prayer, visited holy spaces and listened for the direction of the Holy Spirit. In the end, they were convicted that what they were being called to do was divinely guided and in no way going against their faith. Instead, they firmly honored the Creator every step of the way and had scripture to support their actions. They were fascinated by their findings and decided to write a book, *Reiki and Faith*, to help others who also struggled or are struggling with combining the two worlds of energy medicine and faith. They are now confident that they are to redefine ministry to allow people to experience God or Love in new ways.

When working with individuals during private sessions, Lovell acts as the spiritual gatekeeper and prays a shield of protection around the space and the people within it. She helps guide a conversation with the client while she and Groth actively listen to observe patterns of behavior and thoughts. Groth leads the individuals through meditations or tapping, also known as EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques). The simple, yet powerful method helps in healing at both a conscious and unconscious level. Together, they end the session by inviting the Holy Spirit to flow from their hands and guide them as vessels to offer healing to individuals in mind, body, and spirit through the practice of Reiki.

Lovell and Groth, partnering under the name of Wonder-twinning, offer workshops and retreats for events, organizations, and private gatherings. They are repeat guests with organizations such as the non-profit, North Star Reach, where they offer their teachings as speakers at the North Star Reach Care-Givers Conference. They share their mindfulness modalities and techniques through interactive discussions and help others learn how to move through challenging times and emotions. They also lead a workshop series where they teach on the mindfulness of thoughts, how they impact the body, and how to nurture the mind, body, and spirit.

Throughout the past two years, the Wonder-twins have worked with over eighty clients in their peaceful, judgment free office, in hospital rooms, at bedsides, and in nursing homes. People come for a variety of reasons: physical illnesses, childhood traumas, emotional abuse, depression and anxiety, and issues they weren’t able to name, but knew needed to be addressed. Some had deep faith, while others had no faith. Knowing that all people have within themselves the power to heal their own beings, Groth and Lovell became guides on the journeys. The ladies have witnessed miraculous healings take place. They have witnessed people release limiting beliefs that they have spoken to themselves for lifetimes. They have seen wonderful recoveries after surgeries when people first prepared their mind, body, and spirit through a Wonder-twin session. Messages have been received and shared leaving clients awe-filled that the angel guides know them personally and communicate with them specifically.

THEY DOVE INTO SCRIPTURE, SPENT TIME IN MEDITATION AND PRAYER, VISITED HOLY SPACES AND LISTENED FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN THE END, THEY WERE CONVICTED THAT WHAT THEY WERE BEING CALLED TO DO WAS DIVINELY GUIDED AND IN NO WAY GOING AGAINST THEIR FAITH.

These two women now accept that they have been chosen to pioneer the blending of two worlds of spirituality—one rooted in faith and the other in energy medicine and mindfulness. Since that first day when Groth approached Lovell and asked about self-love, these two women have been on a mission to teach people how to love themselves. Loving one’s self often means doing the hard work to bring healing to areas of one’s life that need some compassion sprinkled on them. They believe wholeheartedly that when people love themselves genuinely, they are more able to receive love from God and others, and it’s in that receiving that naturally they give it away to their neighbor. Loving oneself has a positive ripple effect to everyone around that person.

The Wonder-twins were featured speakers at the International Reiki Rays Conference this past year where they shared their concept of Wonder-twinning. You can read more in depth about their story in their new book, Reiki and Faith: Supporting Reiki through Holy Experiences and Scripture *available from Balboa Press. If you would like to learn more or are interested in experiencing healing in a new way, you can schedule an appointment for Wonder-twinning™ by visiting the website: iamwellreiki.com or by calling (734) 604-6938.*

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

PERSONAL GROWTH

MNRI Dynamic and Postural class with Jackie Kilburn • June 1-4 • time TBA • Inquire for cost. Contact 810-231-9042; ump-in-products.com.

Using Genetic Genealogy with Your Family History with Conrad Welsing • July 5, 12, and 19 • 6 – 8 p.m. • Explore the popular trend of DNA testing for individuals in an easy-to-understand casual presentation. You will explore the options and further work necessary to make your testing results even more worthwhile. Discussion and examples of current offerings are key components of this class. $59. Contact Washtenaw Community College at 734-677-5060 or to register online: wccnet.edu/noncredit.

Stress Reduction & Intuition Development with Monica Levin • Mondays weekly • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Join us for spiritual workshops in Center Line, MI to gain clarity about your goals in life and reduce stress through a variety of techniques. $20 per session. Contact Monica Levin at 248-656-2505; linktr.ee/monicalevin.

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care with Christy DeBurton • Inquire for dates • Self-paced • In this 4-week course you will be guided on a journey of self-discovery to examine the obstacles that stand in the way of you taking better care of yourself; learn tools to help you cultivate greater awareness around your self-care needs; and explore the healing qualities of movement, nutrition, sleep, gratitude, self-compassion, nature and more. $79. Contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com; yogaroomannarbor.com.

AmplyJOYCreating as 8Ws with Rev. Dr. Sannyu Cawarrie • June 3 • 1 – 2 p.m. • Exploration of The Healed Holy, Whole self. $17. Contact Sharejoyplaytime9@gmail.com.

Women's Circle with Facilitated by Lisa Lorius • First Mondays monthly, May 2 – August 8 • 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. • Women's support group: please see description on our calendar page lighthousecenterinc.org $10 donation. Contact 734-808-1335; lighthousecenterinc.org.

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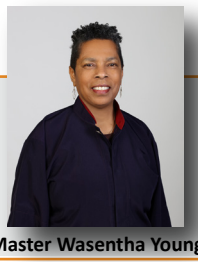
Ongoing Classes

Crazy Wisdom Discount $10
Use code: CW2022

Classes Begin May 2



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You will find quality instructions and professional care at the Peaceful Dragon School.

www.PeacefulDragonSchool.com

PROSPERITY AND ABUNDANCE

Moon Phase Manifestation with Alicia Clark-Teper • Third Mondays monthly • May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, Sept 19 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Learn how to manifest with the Moon's energy thru the cycles, phases, zodiac, corresponding Arch Angels, goddesses, essential oils, crystals, and more. Make moon water, crystal grids, and receive crystals. Each class will have different activities. $165 all 5 classes or $44 each class including crystals. Contact Alicia at 734-945-5396 or clarkteper@yahoo.com.

REIKI

Reiki I & II Training with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday – Sunday: June 3, 6 – 8 p.m., June 4, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., June 5, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. • Reiki is a Japanese spiritual practice that supports healing and personal development—a natural, non-invasive, and simple method of healing. Common health concerns relieved by Reiki treatment include digestion, insomnia, anxiety, pain, chronic stress, and discomfort. $333. Contact Rob at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

RETREATS

3 Day Holistic Yoga and Meditation Retreat at Lake Michigan with Ema Stefanova • Friday – Sunday, May 13 - 15 • Friday 5 p.m. - Sunday 11 a.m. • Experience classical yoga/meditation as a way of life; develop and refine your practice in a peaceful environment. Lodging, vegetarian meals, and six guided group classes included in cost. RYT200 and RYT500 teachers earn CE hours with the Yoga Alliance. $479. Additional retreats TBA. Contact EmaStefanova@cs.com or 734-665-7801; YogaAndMeditation.com.

Write Time Writers' Spring Retreat with Michelle McLemore • Saturday-Sunday, May 14 - 15 • 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. • Immerse yourself in a weekend designed to support your work on your projects. Optional self-exploration, poetry, block-breakers, & memoir activities. Nourishing food supports dialogue about the craft, publishing, and optional peer reading. Capping at 10. Registration deadline May 2. See https://bit.ly/WriteTimeSpring. $125 for retreat and menu. Room rates separate. Contact Michelle McLemore at 517-270-0986 or energy@michellemclemore.com.

Overnight Beginners Zen Retreat with Maum Gloria Cox • May 20-21, July 22-23 • 7 p.m. Friday - noon Saturday • This format is primarily intended for out-of-towners, but local people who cannot attend the Thursday evening course, or who prefer the overnight retreat, are also welcome. $160/$120 students or unwaged, includes accommodation and a vegetarian breakfast. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Guided Personal Retreat with Song of the Morning Yoga Retreat Community • May 27-29, June 10-12, July 8-10, August 19-21 • Friday 4 p.m. - Sunday 2 p.m. • An uplifting weekend experiencing spiritual refreshment and relaxation in a supportive peaceful atmosphere. Join our daily schedule of events, including yoga, meditation, devotional practices, community meals, and more; opportunity to consult with an experienced meditator for guidance and answers. Free; lodging starting at $50/night. Contact 989-983-4107 or office@songofthemorning.org; songofthemorning.org.

Spring Retreat - Praise of Buddha: Unrivaled Lion of the Shakyas with Demo Rinpoche • Friday – Sunday, May 27, 8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., May 28, 8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., and May 29, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. • The main purpose is to evoke Buddha's love and to call on Buddha's grace to enable oneself to follow his path. $180 members / $225 Non-Members. Pay what you can. Contact 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this Calendar, please look in the section that follows the Calendar, which is called "Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers" and which starts on page 118.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

RETREATS CONTINUED

Summer Monastic Retreat with Haju Sunim • May 30 - June 27 OR July 11 - August 8 • Learn the practical skills of waking up both for ourselves and others. Schedule includes early morning, noon, and evening meditation practice and liturgy, Buddhist study and daily dharma discussion, work with the hands, and community service. Students at all levels accepted. Simple accommodations and vegetarian meals provided. Cost is $75/week or $300/month. Scholarships available. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

The Differences Among Us: Seeking Unity in Diversity with Laurie Brink, OP • Tuesday, June 7 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • As women religious, we have taken to heart the urgent invitation to become Anti-racist. We recognize the definition of "neighbor" extends beyond our borders, and so we welcome the immigrant and exiled. We strive to heed the clarion call of Laudato Si' to care for our common home. Donation. Contact webercenter.org.

Five-Day Summer Retreat (Jeongmaeng Jeongnin) in Chicago with Toan Jose Castelao • June 28 - July 3 • 7 p.m. Thursday - 10 a.m. Sunday • This retreat is an intensive period of Zen practice geared toward the experienced student. Cost is $60/day, $50/day for members. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

Summer Retreat - Wheel of Sharp Weapons: Striking the Enemy Within with Wisdom and Compassion with Demo Rinpoche • Daily, July 11 – 17 • 8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. • Composed by Dharmarakshita, this ancient Indian Buddhist practice of Lojong or Mind Training includes powerful methods to cut through self-cherishing and self-grasping and thus remove the obstacles to attaining full enlightenment. $475 members / $550 Non-members. Pay what you can. Contact 734-994-3387 or programs@jewelheart.org; jewelheart.org/Free-weekly-virtual-programs to register.

Meditation Getaway: One Day Meditation Retreat with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, July 30 • 8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. • This day long retreat at 7 Notes Natural Health is a chance to connect to nature, to spirit, to your higher self. Walking/hiking meditation opens our day. We continue with chanting, journaling, breath work, and more. Ample time for sharing and reflection will be provided. $150. Registration required at forms.gle/EfWwnu94iqJJcAFE8. Space is limited. Contact Rob at 248-962-5475, rob@robmeyerkukan.com; 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

The Experience of God in Everyday Life: A Day of Reflection with Patricia Cooney Hathaway • Saturday, July 30 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. • Morning Reflection: Seasons of Grace: the challenge of finding God. Afternoon Reflection: Portraits of Grace: in each season of our lives, the stories of women who model what holiness looks like through the prism of the beatitudes. $25. Contact webercenter.org.

Summer Peace Camp with Peace Camp Coordinators • July 29 - August 3 or August 2 - 7 • Begins at noon • Tent camping for families and children near Ann Arbor. Programs focus on learning about peace and happiness from the Buddhist perspective of the interrelationship of all things. Activities emphasize fun, mindfulness, cooperation and appreciation for life while seeking to balance structure and spontaneity. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

1 Day Meditation Retreat in Chinese with Master Zhong Hai (Winnie) w/ optional ON-LINE • First Sundays, monthly. • 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. • One day meditation retreat taught in Chinese, with an alternating schedule of Yoga or Traditional Chinese Exercises (gong fa), walking, standing, and sitting meditation. A Traditional Chinese Tea Ceremony with be shared mid-day. Suggested Donation $45 - $100. Register on-line. Contact Office@TripleCraneRetreat.org; TripleCraneRetreat.org.

1 Day Meditation Retreats in English with Kamakshi Ma (Betty Eller) w/ ON-LINE option • Second, Fourth Sundays monthly. • 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. • This one-day meditation retreat, is taught in English, has an alternating schedule of Yoga or Traditional Chinese Exercises (gong fa), walking, standing and sitting meditation. A Traditional Chinese Tea Ceremony with be shared mid-day. Register online. $45 - $100. Contact Office@TripleCraneRetreat.org; TripleCraneRetreat.org.

SHAMANISM

Cycles of Life with Connie Lee Eiland • April 30 - May 1 • Saturday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. • This class will present pathways to help with your own life explorations. We will work with the Medicine Wheel, the Spirit of the Moon, our Ancestors for healing and divination. Ability to journey is mandatory. $180 until April 16; $220 after. Contact Connie Eiland at 248-809-3230 or clshebear7@gmail.com; shewolfshaman.com.

Journey Circle with Judy Liu Ramsey ON-LINE • First and Third Thursdays monthly: May 5 and 19, June 2 and 16, July 7 and 21, August 4 and 18 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • A shamanic circle to explore the perspective of different human conditions, to heal those, and to retrieve practical knowledge for everyday life. Pre-requisite: know how to journey. $25 per session/$40 per month. Contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net; JudyRamsey.net.

Community Painting, Meditation, and Pipe Blessing with Darryl Barking Dog Brown, Medidigwe Animush • May 6 - 8 • May 6 at 7 p.m.; May 7 from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; May 8 at 11 a.m. • See the 2021 Community Painting unveiled; participate in a 2022 group painting. Saturday, a daylong Atavistic painting meditation workshop experience. Sunday, a Pipe Ceremony Blessing of the Huron River and Prayer Walk at Riverside Park. Most events Free. Contact Cynthia Greene at 734-476-7111 or Thiagreene@aol.com.

Illness and Healing from a Shamanic Perspective: Extraction with Judy Ramsey • Saturday – Sunday, May 21-22 in person; ON-LINE June 18-19 • 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. • This is an advanced class limited to six. Deepen your understanding of how spirit can help the physical body thrive or not. Explore ways to "diagnose" an illness and address healing and learn ways to extract spiritual intrusions. Inquire for prerequisites and reading. $180 per person/$75 for repeating students. Contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net; JudyRamsey.net.

Introduction to Journeying with Connie Lee Eiland • Sundays, May 22 or July 17 • 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. • Six hr. class includes power animal retrieval and journeys to Upper, Lower, and Middle Worlds. Journeying is with drums and rattles. $70 until 2 wks. before, $80 after. Contact Connie Eiland at 248-809-3230 or clshebear7@gmail.com; shewolfshaman.com.

Creating Safety and Sacred Space with Connie Eiland • June 12 • 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. • This class gives you practices, ways of looking at safety and sacred space that will serve you. We set an altar together, so you become aware of the aliveness of all beings. Ability to journey is a requirement. $80 until May 28, then $110. Contact Connie Eiland at 248-809-3230 or clshebear7@gmail.com; shewolfshaman.com.

5 Day Soul Retrieval Residential Training with Connie Lee Eiland • July 1-6 • Friday, 7 p.m. – Wednesday, noon • This class is for people who want to bring soul retrieval into their practices. Participants will be trained in diagnosis, soul retrieval, and intensive after-care. Strong journey skills are required. There is an application process. $420 until June 15; $475 after. Inquire about food and lodging. Money due May 7. Contact Connie at 248-809-3230 or clshebear7@gmail.com; shewolfshaman.com.

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We will never sell or share your information!

CONNIE LEE EILAND is a shamanic practitioner and teacher and has focused on this since retiring from a 50-year physical therapy career in 2021. For Connie, Covid-19 was a time of challenges and learning. For 20 years her shamanic practice was primarily in person, but throughout the pandemic, shamanic sessions were done long distance. Sessions for Soul Retrieval, Extraction, Power Animal Retrieval, and more can now be either long distance or in person.

She leads a monthly drum circle—more accurately, a journey circle. For over a year these circles were held via teleconference, but they now have resumed in person with masks, and she has continued to teleconference as well to expand participation.

Before the pandemic, Eiland started teaching a class called Creating Safety and Sacred Space. She discovered that teleconferencing and videoconferencing made it crucial to strengthen sacred space and she added layers of safety to her own practice and to the class.

Eiland teaches eleven shamanic classes over a two year period, including multiple Introduction to Journey classes. The Introduction to Journeying is required to take advanced classes or to join the drum circle, and she is adding a new class this year called Greater Wholeness.

Some of the shamanic classes are specifically for people interested in becoming shamanic practitioners, while other classes are geared for personal growth and contain information practitioners can share with clients. Learn more at shewolfshaman.com.

Basic Journeying: The Art of Shamanism for Practical and Visionary Purposes in Life with Judy Liu Ramsey ON-LINE • July 9 & 10 • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. each day • The shamanic journey is an easy and powerful tool we can use to access spiritual information. Begin to develop a relationship with a compassionate spirit or power animal. Learn techniques to develop a self-directed practice of empowerment. $150 per household. Pre-requisite for other courses. Contact info@judyramsey.net; JudyRamsey.net.

Shamanic Animal Communication with Judy Liu Ramsey ONLINE • Wednesdays weekly • August 3 - September 21 • 7 – 9 p.m. • Learn the difference between telepathic and shamanic animal communication and how to apply the best of both in an integrated way from Judy who has over 15 years' experience. No prior knowledge of telepathic communication necessary. Knowledge of shamanic journeying is required. $240 per person/$100 for repeating students. Contact Judy at info@judyramsey.net; JudyRamsey.net.

Ancestors & Descendants with Connie Eiland • August 20-21 • Saturday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. • This class investigates our connections to the ancestors and descendants in ways that impact them and us. This class will include journeys, healing, and sacred art. (Cycles of Life is a requirement.) Ability to journey is mandatory. $180 until Aug. 6; then $220. Contact Connie at 248-809-3230 or clshebear7@gmail.com; shewolfshaman.com.

Soul Retrieval with Judy Liu Ramsey • Sunday - Friday, August 21-26 • Sunday, 6 p.m. – Friday, 12 p.m. • In this shamanic training, learn to work with your guiding spirits to restore a soul's essence. Through ceremony and initiation, expand your knowledge of healing the community and nature. This is an advanced residential class limited to 12. Inquire for prerequisites and reading. $600 tuition plus residence fee $350. Contact Judy Ramsey at info@judyramsey.net; JudyRamsey.net.

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SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Interfaith Sunday Service • Sundays, May 1 - August 28 • 10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. • Sunday celebration. Free, but donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Akashic Records Intro and Upcoming Classes with Shellie Powers ON-LINE • Mondays, May 2 - August 29 • 10 – 10:30 a.m. • The Akashic Record is an experiential body of wisdom, insight, guidance, and healing information. Introduction to the Certified Practitioner, Advanced Certified Practitioner and Healing Through the Akashic Record Certification classes, and upcoming classes, both in-person and online. Free. Contact Shellie at info@thepowersof.com or 734-926-8423; thepowersof.com.

Sufi Chanting Meditation & Discussion with Imam Kamau Ayubbi • Tuesdays, May 3-Aug 30 • 6:30pm-8pm • exploration of Sufism $5-$10 per class. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Midrash Study with Karen Greenberg • Mostly first Fridays: May 6, June 3, July 8, August 5 • 2:30 - 5:30 p.m. • The Old Testament (Torah) compiles interesting data like who ascended to Heaven alive, who was so righteous that their deceased bodies never decomposed, the seven things that we are not permitted to know in human form. $180. Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

Science of Mind for Today with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth & Janet Somalinog • May 11, 25, June 8, 22, July 13, 27, August 10, 24 • 7 - 8:30 p.m. • Study of a Science of Mind by Ernest Holmes. Free, but donations accepted. Contact 734-327-0270; Interfaithspirit.org.

Are you interested in having your art published?

We are looking for some great art to liven up the calendar section of the Crazy Wisdom Community Journal. If you can digitally deliver camera-ready art in a jpg or tiff file and think your style and subjects are a great fit for the magazine, please email a letter of interest and a high res image submission to: Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

Reasonable compensation. We will not respond to links to your website portfolio or your blog. Please pick the best example of your art that fits the magazine and send that image to us.

FRAN ADLER is a licensed therapist who's been in private practice for over two decades. She launched Ann Arbor Walk and Talk Therapy in the winter of 2020, just as Covid-19 hit. As we soon learned, it was safer to be with people outside than inside buildings, and once vaccination became a reality and made it easier to socialize, she decided that 2021 was as good a time as any to meet clients outside the traditional office setting. Also, since more people have been experiencing pandemic-related issues with mental health, it seemed that there was no better time to start. To start a conversation with Fran Adler, call her at 734-429-2076 or email a2walktalk@gmail.com. If walking isn't an option for you, Adler also provides phone and zoom counseling.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

Lightworker Activation with SANDYA - Sandra Shears • Wednesdays • Starting May 18 - • 7 p.m. • As a Lightworker or World Server you have incarnated at this time to facilitate the transition into the next Age. It is time to bring forth the gifts that will accelerate healing and activate Spiritual Purpose. $100 per month. Contact sandya2033@yahoo.com; sandya-sandrashears.com.

Lightworker Development with SANDYA - Sandra Shears • Third Fridays Monthly • Starting May 20 - • 7 p.m. • Contact sandya2033@yahoo.com; sandya-sandrashears.com.

Akashic Records Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers • Saturday – Sunday, May 21 - May 22 • Saturday, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. • Experience the Akashic Records through the Pathway Prayer Process© to access the heart of the Records. Learn about the method of access and develop skills for successful navigation of the Records for yourself and others. Inquire for certification requirements and prerequisites. $360. Contact Shellie at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

Akashic Records Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers ON-LINE • Friday-Saturday, June 10 - June 11 • Friday, 7 - 10 p.m.; Saturday, 12 - 7 p.m. • Experience the Akashic Records through the Pathway Prayer Process© to access the heart of the Records. Learn the method of access and develop skills for successful navigation of the Records for yourself and others. Inquire for pre-requisites and certification requirements. $360. Contact Shellie Powers at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

Akashic Records Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers • Friday-Saturday, June 24 - June 25 • Friday, 6 - 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. • Experience the Akashic Records through the Pathway Prayer Process© to access the heart of the Records. Learn the method of access and develop skills for successful navigation of the Records for yourself and others. Inquire for pre-requisites and certification requirements. $360. Contact Shellie at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

Akashic Records Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers ON-LINE • Tuesday-Wednesday, July 12 and July 13 • Tuesday, 3 - 6 p.m.; Wednesday, 1 - 8 p.m. • Experience the Akashic Records through the Pathway Prayer Process© to access the heart of the Records. Learn about the method of access and develop skills for successful navigation of the Records for yourself and others. Inquire for pre-requisites and certification requirements. $360. Contact Shellie Powers at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

Akashic Records Advanced Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers • Friday – Saturday, July 22 - July 23 • Friday, 6 - 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. • Deepen your spiritual awareness by developing skills facilitating your transformation: Energy Healing, Ancestral Clearing, Past Lives. These are the Foundation protocols for mining the Records and enjoying the benefits of this work. Inquire for prerequisite. $430. Contact Shellie at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

Connecting with Archangels - Parts 1-4 with Karen Greenberg • Sundays, July 24 - August 14 • 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. • Become acquainted with the various Archangels represented in the Sephirot (Spheres) in the Tree of Life. Learn who the Archangels are, what they do, how to create a sacred, protected space, whom to call, and how to safely call them. $777 for all 4 parts. Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

Connecting with Various G-D Names/Aspects: Heavenly Travel with Karen Greenberg • Sundays, July 24 - August 14 • 5 - 9:30 p.m. • Learn to create a sacred, protected space to astral travel safely to planets associated with the Sephirot (Spheres) in the Tree of Life, become more acquainted with aspects of G-D, connect to the energy aspects of G-D, and the special qualities they represent. $777 for all four parts. Contact Karen at 734-417-9511 or krngrnbg@gmail.com; clair-ascension.com.

Healing Through the Akashic Records Certification with Shellie Powers • Saturday-Sunday, August 13 - August 14 • 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. • Transform relationship with wounding life experiences to experience the perfection of your Soul. Learn spiritual practice unconditional self-love, shift from resentment to acceptance, find freedom from limiting patterns. Activate inner ascension matrix, rise above difficulties. Inquire for prerequisites and certification requirements. $500. Contact Shellie at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

Akashic Records Advanced Practitioner Certification with Shellie Powers ONLINE • Tuesday – Wednesday, August 16 - 17 • Tuesday, 3 - 6 p.m.; Wednesday, 1 - 8 p.m. • Develop spiritual skills such as energy healing, ancestral clearing, past lives. These are the foundation protocols for mining the records and enjoying the benefits of this work. Inquire for prerequisite and certification requirements. $430. Contact Shellie at 734-926-8423 or info@thepowersof.com; thepowersof.com.

> It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.
>
> —Albert Einstein

TAI CHI, MARTIAL ARTS, & SELF DEFENSE

Beginner Tai Chi with Master Wasentha Young • May 2 - Aug 4 • Mondays, 10 - 11:15 a.m.; Thursdays, 6 - 7:15 p.m. • The T'ai Chi form, often characterized as a moving meditation, is a series of postures linked together in a continuous, fluid manner which integrates both physical and mental energy mechanics, promotes relaxation, a sense of prowess, and spatial awareness. Hybrid class, in-person, or on-line. $195. Contact 734-741-0695 or info@peacefuldragonschool.com; peacefuldragonschool.com.

Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan with Sifu Genie Parker & certified teachers • Mondays and Thursdays • 10 a.m. • Wu Style tai chi chuan is a soft style martial art emphasizing balance and relaxation. All are welcome to learn this ancient art of meditation in motion. Additional times available. $45/month for 1 class per week; $70 for 2 classes per week. Student/senior rates available. Contact info@wustyle-annarbor.com or 734-249-9887.

The New Context of Essential Oils

By Renette Dickinson

Take a moment to imagine a beautiful rose garden. Notice your surroundings. Feel the sun warming the surface of your skin, as a gentle breeze dances by. Listen to the sounds of nature around you. The leaves on the trees sway in the breeze. Birds off in the distance. A sense of stillness within the activity of nature.

Enter this garden and cast your gaze upon the beauty of the roses. See their strong stable stems supporting their weight. Touch the petals, notice how soft and delicate they are. Take in the colors, the beauty, the marvel of it all.

Relax your focus. As you do, notice a congregation of bees floating among the roses. Hear the humming of their wings as they fly from one flower to the next. Their buzz creates a natural quivering, shaking the pollen off one flower onto another. And then, each bee will choose the perfect flower to land upon.

Look closely now, at the rose in front of you and the bees at work wiggling their way in a precise circle, so the pollen sticks to their feet and bodies as they feed from the nectar.

The true wonder of this moment goes unseen. The rose opens her petals to welcome the bee encouraging it to land within. She needs the pollen to be taken and rubbed onto another flower so she can produce rose hips full of seed.

AS THE ROSE OPENS, THOUSAND OF AROMATIC MOLECULES BURST INTO THE AIR AS A CHEMICAL MESSAGING SYSTEM THAT CALL TO THE BEES, INVITING THIS HARMONIOUS EXCHANGE

As she opens, thousands of aromatic molecules burst into the air as a chemical messaging system that calls to the bees, inviting this harmonious exchange.

Scientists hypothesize that we respond to the essential oils so readily, not because we are connected to the plants, but rather that we are similarly evolved to the insects. This forms a massive part of the research into essential oils today.

THE LATEST STUDIES IN ESSENTIAL OILS

According to a news release on November 28, 2020, by the University of East Anglia, the use of essential oils to treat long-term smell loss, or smell distortions related to Covid-19, has shown beneficial results for some patients. Smell training consists of sniffing at least four different essential oils of a familiar scent, such as lemon, twice a day for several months.

Studies show that aromas affect emotional states, stress levels, behavior, perception, cognitive processes, and brain chemistry, in positive ways. The inhalation of certain essential oils, or combinations of oils, can increase or slow energy levels, and performance. For example, studies on peppermint essential oil demonstrate that it promotes alert mental states, and enhances the sensory pathway for visual detection. It allows individuals more control over their allocation of attention and increases recall when used at ambient levels.

Other oils, such as Roman chamomile and sweet marjoram, have been found to stimulate a part in the brain that causes the release of serotonin, helping to sedate the body and decrease stress.

SCIENTISTS HYPOTHESIZE THAT WE RESPOND TO THE ESSENTIAL OILS SO READILY, NOT BECAUSE WE ARE CONNECTED TO THE PLANTS, BUT RATHER THAT WE ARE SIMILARLY EVOLVED TO THE INSECTS. THIS FORMS A MASSIVE PART OF THE RESEARCH INTO ESSENTIAL OILS TODAY.

Various studies of ambient Lavender essential oil use led to better waking moods and increased sleep within psychogeriatric patients under long-term treatment for insomnia.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ESSENTIAL OILS

Not only do essential oils influence us physically, mentally, and emotionally, they also influence us on a psychological level as well.

The amygdala is part of the limbic system and is associated with fear responses and with pleasure. An abnormal functioning of the amygdala corresponds with phobias, posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and autism. The hypervigilance of an overactive amygdala can be soothed with the use of essential oils.

Non-clinical depression is considered an adjustment condition, a normal reaction to painful events, rather than a true depressive state. Essential oils with antidepressant effects can counter symptoms of non-clinical depression, such as low moods, mental and emotional fatigue, episodes of sadness, or apathy caused by distressing situations.

Neurosedatives are agents that sedate the central nervous system to produce a relaxed mental state. GABA is the primary inhibitory neurotransmitter in the central nervous system. We feel sleepy and relaxed when GABA levels are high. Essential oils with neurosedative actions can gently increase GABA levels or act on excitatory neurotransmitters to cause a mild sedative effect.

Neurostimulants are agents that stimulate the central nervous system to produce alert mental states. This happens by causing an increase in cerebral blood flow, by increasing beta wave activity in the brain, by stimulating the area of the brain associated with the flow of norepinephrine, and by blocking GABA receptors.

Norepinephrine is fundamental to increase mental alertness, focus attention, and to the forming and retrieving of memories. High levels are associated with the fight-flight response. Some neurostimulants act to block receptor sites for GABA to reduce its activity on the brain. This in turn, helps to improve attention and mental alertness.

When experiencing low mental energy and brain fog, or when dealing with burnout and mental exhaustion, utilize essential oils with neurostimulant properties.

Dopamine relates to the brain's reward system. Dopamine plays a role in mood, sensations of well being, sleep patterns, motor activity, and allocation of attention and learning. Low levels are related to ADHD. Essential oils with dopamine balancing properties are an excellent choice to elicit a greater sense of interconnected equilibrium.

Serotonin is another neurotransmitter found in the central nervous system and is related to mood, sleep, sexuality, and appetite, among other body functions. Low or abnormal serotonin levels are associated with obsessive-compulsive disorders, anxiety, depression, and angry or aggressive behavior. In these instances, essential oils with serotonin-balancing properties are most effective.

NOT ONLY DO ESSENTIAL OILS INFLUENCE US PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, AND EMOTIONALLY, THEY ALSO INFLUENCE US ON A PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVEL AS WELL.

Euphorics work by increasing the activity at the prefrontal cortex of the brain, promoting positive feelings of expansion, connection, and consciousness. Euphorics sedate the amygdala and the thalamus, and act directly on some types of serotonin receptors. The thalamus regulates sleep patterns, alertness, wakefulness, and relays motor and sensory signals to the cerebral cortex.

The use of essential oils with euphoric properties can help bring a sense of being connected as we find ourselves isolated and alone, and a sense of peace during some of the difficult and disturbing times our world is currently facing.

NOT ALL OILS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Some manufactures of essential oils use chemical agents during the distillation process to save money and in turn raise profits. This not only affects the quality of the oil produced, it also has an effect on you. As a consumer, it is important to know exactly what you are buying and the properties that each bottle of oil will have.

Look for the GC/MS Report. The Gas Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry Report tells you what chemical constituents can be found in each oil. This report can be easily found or is easily accessible from reputable companies.

Renette Dickinson, CHt., CVT, CCFT has been working with essential oils both personally and professionally for 25 years. Many of the certifications she holds include education in the use of essential oil. Dickinson incorporates aromatherapy into her work along with performance coaching, Healing Touch, and canine fitness training. You can contact her at rdickinson@lakewoodschool.edu.

The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

TAI CHI, MARTIAL ARTS, & SELF DEFENSE CONTINUED

Yang & Chen - Qigong & Tai Chi with Karla Groesbeck • Monday through Friday • 1-hour classes - various times • Yang & Chen - Qigong & Tai Chi - Beginner - advanced. Solo, two-person, weapons. Outside, inside & zoom. Yang Long Form 108, Chen Laojia Yilu. Various qigong sets & Zhan Zhuang. Staff, Bang, Ruler, Tuishou, Push Hands. Free (Seniors); Low Fee. Contact Karla Groesbeck at 734-276-3059, info@taichilove.com; TaiChiLove.com.

Chen Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Mondays and Thursdays, 5 - 6 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. • Instruction in Chen tai chi chuan, a unique movement art emphasizing inner stillness and relaxation developed through disciplined whole-body integration and refined awareness. Free. Contact annarbortaichi@gmail.com; annarbortaichi.com.

Okinawan Karate-Do with Asian Martial Arts Studio • Monday – Thursday • 10:30 a.m. • The core curriculum of the Karate-do program is based on two systems of traditional Okinawan Karate-do: Shorin-ryu Karate-do and Shudokan Karate-do. The Shudokan tradition incorporates several different systems including Goju-ryu, Tomari-te, and others. At advanced levels, students also train in Kobujutsu. Additional days and times available. $40 for 2 introductory classes; $90 per person, $105 monthly. Contact 734.994.3620 or info@a2amas.com; a2amas.com/contact.php.

Aikido with Asian Martial Arts Studio • Tuesdays & Thursdays • 7:30 p.m. • Considered to be one of the internal arts, Aikido's main emphasis is on spherical motion and pure technique. Training primarily involves joint locking and throwing techniques, which are used to redirect and control an opponent's aggressive force. Many techniques used in empty-hand Aikido are derived from the use of certain weapons. Additional days and times available. $40 for 2 introductory classes; $90 per person, $105 monthly. Contact 734.994.3620 or info@a2amas.com; a2amas.com/contact.php.

Kung Fu with Asian Martial Arts Studio • Tuesday & Wednesdays • 6:30 p.m. • The curriculum includes external martial arts, such as Hung Gar, Praying Mantis, Ying Chao, T'an T'ui, and Dragon. These emphasize power sources gained through physical development, hand-eye coordination, reaction time, agility, power, mechanical advantage, and balance. Additional dates and times are available. $40 for 2 introductory classes; $90 per person, $105 monthly. Contact 734.994.3620 or info@a2amas.com; a2amas.com/contact.php.

> Fear less, hope more;
> Eat less, chew more;
> Whine less, breathe more;
> Talk less, say more;
> Love more,
> And all good things will be yours.
>
> —Swedish Proverb

Wing Chun with Asian Martial Arts Studio • Fridays • 5:30 p.m. • An efficient system focusing on close inside fighting, using short and fast hand motions, small rotations, sticking and trapping techniques, and low kicks for stability. The two main weapons are the Butterfly Swords and the Dragon Pole. Additional days and times available. $40 for 2 introductory classes; $90 per person, $105 monthly. Contact 734.994.3620 or info@a2amas.com; a2amas.com/contact.php.

CQC Self Defense with Close Quarters Combat Academy • Wednesdays • 7 p.m. • This class is designed to teach self-defense through a simple, straight forward approach. The class covers empty hands, weapons, throws/takedowns, chokes/locks, and grappling. First class Free. $50 monthly. Contact 734-726-4417; cqcacademy.com.

Satria Fighting • Wednesdays • 8 p.m. • (SFA) is a dynamic ancient martial art and a unique Yoga system. Although its lineage date back to Vedic culture, SFA remains highly effective in Self-Defense and is applicable to today's society. SFA also promotes health and wellness through moving meditation and the Satria Yoga system. First class Free. $50 monthly. Contact 734-726-4417; cqcacademy.com.

54 Form Tai Chi with Wu's Tai Chi Chuan Academy • Saturdays • 8:30 - 10 a.m. • 54 Form combines elements of the 108 round and 108 standard forms to help develop the circularity and looseness in more advanced training. Prerequisite: 108 Standard Form. $45/month. Contact 734-249-9887; info@wustyle-annarbor.com.

12 Form Tai Chi with Wu's Tai Chi Chuan Academy • Mondays • 10-11 a.m. • 12 Form: The beginning form that introduces Wu Style and orients the new practitioner to basic principles and alignments while learning a short sequence that can be practiced on one's own. $45/month. Contact 734-249-9887; info@wustyle-annarbor.com.

Adult Karate with ANN ARBOR YMCA • Monday & Wednesday – starting week of Jun 12 • 7:15 - 8 p.m. • For all levels ages 12 and above. Students learn self-defense and develop balance, fitness, coordination, self-confidence, and discipline through practice of basic techniques and forms. $15-$100. Contact 734-661-8043 or efransen@annarborymca.org; annarborymca.org.

Tai Chi Long Form with ANN ARBOR YMCA • Thursdays – starting week of June 12 • 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. • This mixed-level class studies the 108-step Yang style long form and accompanying drills and exercises. Solo form and drill work emphasizes both the meditative aspects of Tai Chi and its Martial Arts roots, and advanced students practice two-person exercises to improve their skills and their understanding of the solo form and Tai Chi principles. $15-$102. Contact 734-661-8043 or efransen@annarborymca.org; annarborymca.org.

Beginner Judo with ANN ARBOR YMCA • Mondays – starting week of Jun 12 • 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. • Students learn maximizing efficiency while minimizing effort. Judo teaches falling, throwing, grappling and submission techniques along with prearranged forms. Judo Club is Free to students enrolled in a Judo technique class. $15-$103. Contact 734-661-8043 or efransen@annarborymca.org; annarborymca.org.

Conditioning and Martial Movement with Huron Valley Aikikai • Mondays & Thursdays • 6:20 - 6:50 p.m. • A short class featuring non-contact, socially distant exercises to develop general physical resiliency and introduce basic martial movements in preparation for Aikido training. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-761-6012; hv-aikido.com.

Adult/Youth Aikido with Huron Valley Aikikai • Mondays, • 7 - 8 p.m. • Full Covid-19 vaccination mandatory for every class. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-761-6012; hv-aikido.com.

Adults & Youth Advanced with Ann Arbor Taekwondo • Monday-Thursday • 6:45 – 7:45 p.m. • Many students join the Tae Kwon Do program simply to learn self-defense or to have a fun, interesting workout. The school offers its students the chance to participate in both local and regional competitions. Children and adults can compete against students from other schools. Division for these matches are based on rank, age, size, and sex. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-972-1178; aataekwondo.com/?page_id=55.

Seniors-Only (All Belts) with Ann Arbor Black Belt Academy • Tuesdays • 10 – 11 a.m. • We utilize a low intensity exercise and stretching routines designed to improve cardiovascular health and mobility. $150 per month. Contact 734-545-3002 or a2b2ten@gmail.com; a2blackbelt.com/schedule.

Adults/Family (All Belts) with Ann Arbor Black Belt Academy • Mondays • 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. • Family classes give you a great opportunity to share in an activity that your child has interest in. While doing so you might just get into the best shape of your life! $150 per month. Contact 734-545-3002 or a2b2ten@gmail.com; a2blackbelt.com/schedule/.

Judo with Japanese Martial Arts Center • Monday & Thursdays • 12-1 p.m. • Judo means "the way of adaptability." It was founded by Jirogo Kano, who based it on techniques from Tenjin Shinyo-ryu, Kito-ryu, and Yoshin-ryu styles of Jujutsu. Judo gets you in extraordinary physical condition, but also gets you used to fast-paced, challenging techniques, and makes you tough. It's great for men, women, and kids. First two sessions FREE. Contact 734-720-0330 or info@japanesemartialartscenter.com; japanesemartialartscenter.com.

Iaido with Japanese Martial Arts Center • Saturdays • 1 - 2 p.m. • The purpose of iaido was to slay an opponent with one stroke of the sword immediately after unsheathing it. To create such a defense system, situations and circumstances of surprise attacks were studied to devise a systematized way to use the sword effectively against many forms of attack. First two sessions FREE. Contact 734-720-0330 or info@japanesemartialartscenter.com; japanesemartialartscenter.com.

ON MAY 1, 2022, THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL WILL BE AVAILBLE ON OUR WEBSITE: CRAZYWISDOMJOURNAL.COM.

Jujutsu with Japanese Martial Arts Center • Thursdays • 7 - 8 p.m. • Nihon Jujutsu is a modern Japanese system of self-defense, fitness, and personal development. It's based on techniques found in both ancient and modern Japanese styles of combat. It is an exceptional example of the true Japanese budo experience that can be found at JMAC! First two sessions FREE. Contact 734-720-0330 or info@japanesemartialartscenter.com; japanesemartialartscenter.com.

Karate with Japanese Martial Arts Center • Fridays, • 5 - 6 p.m. • Karate means "empty hand." The name refers to the fact that many of its techniques are done without weapons. At JMAC, we teach a basic form of karate to kids. It's a great way to help develop their coordination, mental focus, and ability to work alongside others. Your child will love the upbeat atmosphere, the energy, and the games, but he or she will secretly be learning a lot while having tons of fun. First two sessions FREE. Contact 734-720-0330 or info@japanesemartialartscenter.com; japanesemartialartscenter.com.

Cardio Kickboxing with Final Round Training Center • Mondays & Wednesdays • 7 - 8 p.m. • Cardio kickboxing classes, are for those who desire to punch and kick a bag, to get in fantastic shape like a fighter, but you don't have to worry about getting hit. We start off with a warm-up, then, we get into six to eight rounds of hitting the bag. One minute active rest between rounds, to get more out of your workout, or take a quick water break. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-929-4362 or finalroundtrainingcenter@gmail.com; finalroundtrainingcenter.com.

Boxing with Final Round Training Center • Wednesdays • 5:30-6 p.m. • Our boxing fitness class is fun and is an excellent way to get in shape. Even though this is more fitness-based boxing, you will still learn realistic boxing combinations and techniques. The class starts off with the warm-up, we incorporate some shadow boxing, bag work, and mitt work. Inquire for cost. Contact 734-929-4362 or finalroundtrainingcenter@gmail.com; finalroundtrainingcenter.com.

MT Fundamentals with Final Round Training Center • Monday & Wednesdays • 8 - 9 p.m. • Muay Thai, a combat sport from Thailand, uses stand-up striking along with various clinching techniques. It has become the foundation for many MMA fighters' stand-up game because of its ferocious use of hands, feet, elbows and knees. Muay Thai blends these weapons into deadly combinations, earning its nickname as "the art of eight limbs." Inquire for cost. Contact 734-929-4362 or finalroundtrainingcenter@gmail.com; finalroundtrainingcenter.com.

TAROT AND DIVINATION

Tarot Card Reading for Beginners with Conrad Welsing • Wednesdays • May 4, 11, 18 • 6 - 8 p.m. • Discover how to use the imagery and symbolism of tarot to discern personal beliefs. Learn about card meanings that many say impact our lives. We will review the history of cartomancy and the multitude of card reading decks available. $59. Contact Washtenaw Community College at 734-677-5060 or to register online: wccnet.edu/noncredit.

THEATER

Annie Ypsi and the Case of the World's Bestest Big Wheel with Neighborhood Theatre Group • July 9 • 2pm and 4pm • The day of the Huron Valley Bicycle rally is upon us, and Annie and Max want to enter with their custom-built big wheel. But as the race nears, the big wheel has been sabotaged and Annie and Max are disqualified! Can Annie and Max solve the mystery of who sabotaged the bestest big wheel in the whole wide world!? Free outdoor event. Contact info@ntgypsi.org; ntgypsi.org.

WRITING AND POETRY

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series with Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin • Second Wednesdays: May 11 – July 13 • 7pm - 9pm • Poetry Workshop • Free. Contact Edward Morin at 734-668-7523 or eacmorso@sbcglobal.net; cwcircle.poetry.blog.

Crazy Wisdom Readers Series • Fourth Wednesdays • May 25 – July 27 • 7 - 9 p.m. • Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes, open mic reading for one hour. Featured readers include May 25: Miles David Moore and Jo McDougall. June 22: Shutta Crum and Mike Maggio. July 27: Jim Daniels. Free. Contact Edward Morin at 734-668-7523 or eacmorso@sbcglobal.net; cwcircle.poetry.blog.

YOGA

RYT200 and Advanced RYT300 Holistic Yoga and Meditation Teacher Training with EmaStefanova • April 12 - August 30 • See website for times • Our approach is highly experiential, hands-on, common-sense, authentic, student-centered, and research-based. The programs are easy-to-follow, and graduation is based on active participation, homework completion and attendance. Graduates are automatically eligible to register with the Yoga Alliance national registry as an RYT200 or RYT300 respectively. Inquire for cost. Contact EmaStefanova@cs.com or 734-665-7801; YogaAndMeditation.com.

Yoga Classes with David Black • May 3 - Sept 6 • 6:30 - 8 p.m. • Beginning and experienced students in the classes learn traditional yoga postures (hatha yoga) with an emphasis on relaxation, concentration, and working with the breath. The instructors were trained by the Sivananda Yoga Organization and combine that experience with meditation training. $60 for all 6 classes or $12 per drop in class. Contact 734-761-6520 or annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

> Apparently, there is nothing that cannot happen today.
>
> —Mark Twain

Karma Yoga Academy with Susann Spilkin, Nancy McCaochan, Valerie Weir, Katherine Austin Wooley • Saturdays, May 7, June 18, July 16, August 20 • 1 - 6 p.m. • Our updated, relevant-for-today's-world, comprehensive curriculum covers Gods & Goddesses, Multi-dimensional Self/Koshas, The Science of Light, Mantras, Mudras, & Meditation. Now with our KYA courses (offered in-studio & Zoom), there's a new way to provide you with tools for amazing growth. $150 / session. Contact nancy@karma-yoga.net; karma-yoga.net.

The Gods & Goddesses with Susann Spilkin • May 7 • 1 - 6 p.m. • Every picture tells a story. Every god, goddess, and demon does too. As we unpack their iconography and mythology, we will have the keys to their stories and our own. This course is a rich "who's who" of Hindu mythology. $150. Contact Nancy McCaochan at 248-797-4271 or nancy@karma-yoga.net; karma-yoga.net.

The Multi-dimensional Self: Understanding the Koshas with Nancy Jo McCaochan • June 18 • 1 - 6 p.m. • The human bioenergetic field, or biofield, holds the key to our health—physical, mental-emotional, and spiritual. The biofield is often visualized as five separate sheaths of varying energetic frequencies. This course explores both traditional and contemporary teachings about the koshas through lecture, meditative awareness, and personal reflection. $150. Contact nancy@karma-yoga.net; karma-yoga.net.

The Science of Light with Valerie Weir • July 16 • 1 - 6 p.m. • Understand the ancient teachings of Physical and Noetic light. Topics include Kundalini, Mythology of Rahu and Ketu, The Luminaries, Dual and Non-Dual views, Sutras of Patanjali and metaphorical explanations by Lahiri Mahashaya. $150. Contact nancy@karma-yoga.net; karma-yoga.net.

Yoga+Wellness Virtual and In-Person Classes with Christy DeBurton • Ongoing • In-person and virtual yoga and wellness courses: Hatha, Vinyasa, Yin, Yoga for HSPs, Aqua Yoga, Self-Care and more. Inquire for cost. Contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com; yogaroomannarbor.com.

Compassionate Yoga - Remote classes with Mary Seibert • Wednesdays • 4:15 - 5:30 p.m. • Kripalu yoga is great for beginners and seasoned students. Classes are gentle and slow paced. Emphasis is on mindfulness, breath, postures, strength, and balance. Sliding scale. Contact Mary at 734-323-2520, compassionateyoga@outlook.com; compassionateyoga.info.

Yoga for Resilience with Julie Woodward • Wednesdays, May - July • 7- 8:30 p.m. • Experience mindful yoga, meditation, and guided reflection practices as you reconnect to inner wisdom; let go of what no longer serves you; open to what wants to flower within you. Optimize mental health and nervous system resilience. Learn tools to calm anxiety, energize a low mood, and soothe feelings of social isolation. $110 /6-weeks. Contact Julie Woodward at jawh@comcast.net; juliewoodwardmsw.com.

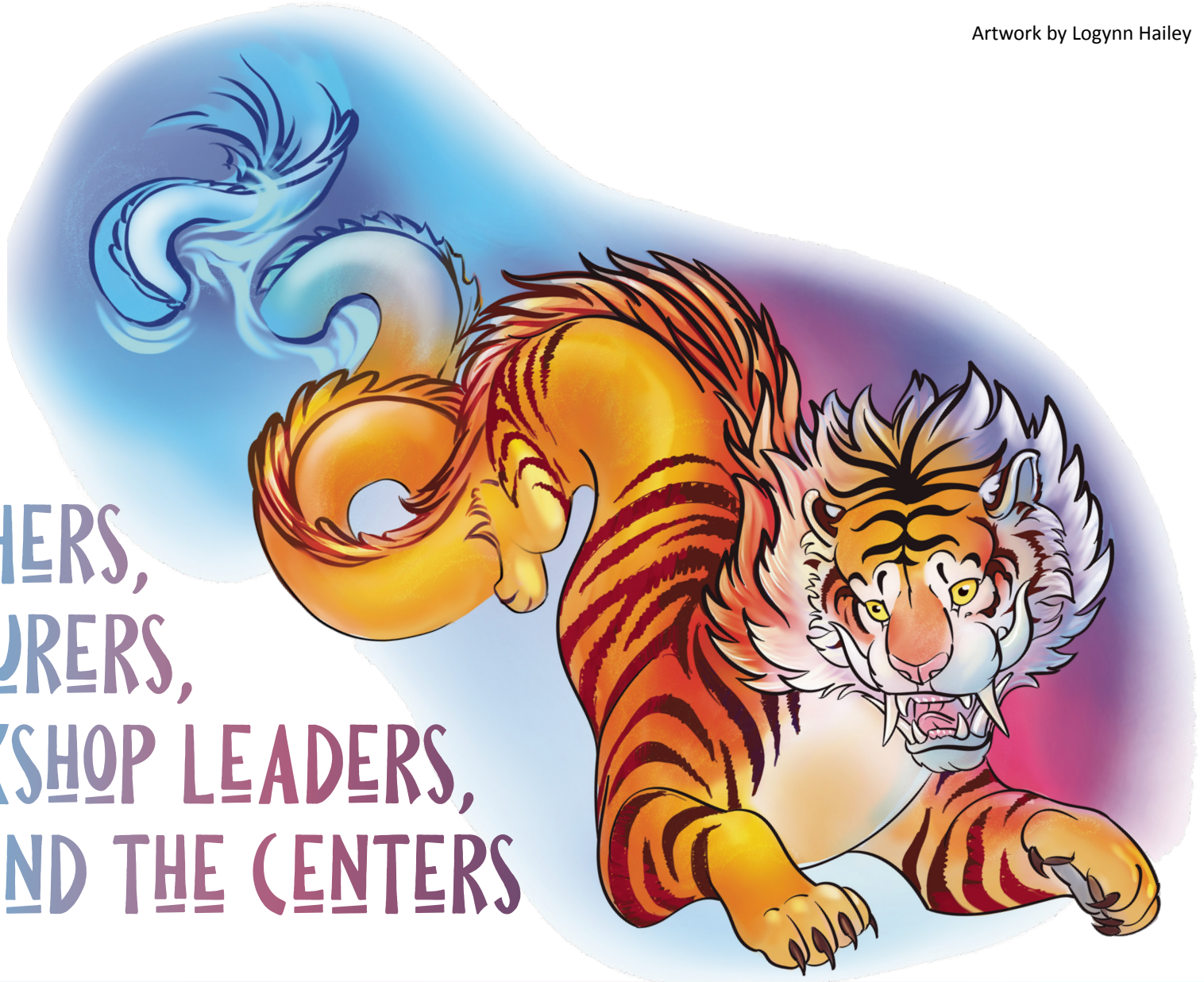
Open Level Yoga with Michele Bond • April - August • Sundays, 4 - 5:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 - 11:30 a.m. • Variations offered for all levels. Our method blends the science of biomechanics with an openhearted, uplifting philosophy. $15 if registered for the semester, $20 drop in with instructor's permission. Contact Michele Bond at 734-358-8564 or michele@yogahouseannarbor.com; yogahouseannarbor.com.

Yoga Essentials with Michele Bond • April - August • Thursdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m. • For those new to yoga, or new to this system. Learn Universal Principles of Alignment for postures, deepening your understanding of the body, and developing a yoga practice that is safe, joyful, therapeutic, and fun! $15 if registered for the semester, $20 drop in with instructor's permission. Contact Michele Bond at 734-358-8564 or michele@yogahouseannarbor.com; yogahouseannarbor.com.

Yoga for Athletes with Michele Bond • April-June, July-August • Wednesdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m. • Athletes or anyone looking for a strong practice will enjoy increasing core strength, enhancing flexibility, agility, balance, and mental focus with this fun and energetic practice. Universal Alignment Principles help open the door to peak performance in sports and all areas of your life. $15 if registered for the semester, $20 drop in with instructor's permission. Contact Michele Bond at 734-358-8564 or michele@yogahouseannarbor.com; yogahouseannarbor.com.

Iyengar Yoga with David Rosenberg • Mondays, 6 - 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays, 7 - 8:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 - 11:30 a.m. • Invigorating yoga postures using BKS Iyengar methods to strengthen the body, create well-being, reduce stress, and release tension. The use of props and individualized instruction enables varying experience, age, flexibility, and strength to participate together. $119 / 9 classes. Contact 734-994-2300 extension 0 or massage4@aol.com; aarecedonline.com/adult-yoga-pilates.

Artwork by Logynn Hailey



TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS, AND THE CENTERS

Aaron is a discarnate entity channeled through Barbara Brodsky, founder and guiding teacher of Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry. Aaron offers wisdom and teaches us that we are all beings of light.

Adrian Dominican Sisters have long been engaged individually and communally, in efforts to protect the integrity of creation and bring about a more just, peaceful, and compassionate world. The Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation coordinates these efforts.

Ann Arbor Black Belt Academy uses the latest training methods approved by the National Academy of Sport Medicine blending tradition with science. We adhere to the Kukkiwon and World Tae Kwon Do Federation regulations while edifying tenants of Tae Kwon Do.

The Ann Arbor Karma Thegsum Choling was founded in 1978 by Ven. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, former abbot of Karma Triyana Dharmachakra, seat of HH 17th Karmapa in North America.

Ann Arbor Public Schools Community Education and Recreation provides quality, affordable enrichment and recreational opportunities to Ann Arbor and surrounding communities, and they have done so for almost 100 years. They serve about 19,000 youth and 18,500 adults annually.

Ann Arbor Tae Kwon Do follows Ji Do Kwan Association and World Tae Kwon Do Federation rules and regulations. They are an authentic Licensed Korean Taekwondo in Ann Arbor, MI.

The Ann Arbor YMCA is a charitable association of adults and children joined by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of children and teens, promoting healthy living, and supporting our neighbors.

Beth Ashcraft, LMT is a massage therapist who also creates aromatherapy products. She manages the Student Massage Clinic and School Store at Irene's. Her massage work is a combination of therapeutic and relaxation techniques, energy work, and Myofascial Release.

Asian Martial Arts Studio is the oldest full-time martial arts school in Ann Arbor; they offer unparalleled opportunities for self-development through training in the traditional martial arts.

Imam Kamau Ayubbi received his religious and spiritual training under the Islamic Supreme Council of America.

Marcia Bailey, M.A., PhD, is a certified Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy Practitioner (1999) and Kripalu Yoga Teacher, teaching connected breathing for 30+ years as a Certified Transformational Breath Facilitator (2004) and a Senior Trainer with the Transformational Breath Foundation (2006).

Judith Bemis, MA, was a clinical social worker who retired and started a second life with art. She studied with Detroit artists, Amy Foster and Todd Burroughs at The Atelier in Royal Oak.

Rita Benn, PhD is a psychologist and instructor of mindfulness meditation with over 30 years of experience in teaching mind-body practices. She is a co-founder of the Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME).

David Black is a certified Sivananda Yoga Instructor.

Darryl Barking Dog Brown - Medidigwe Animush is an Indigenous Odawan Elder, painter, activist, SunDancer, Pow-Wow coordinator, and grandfather.

Michele Bond has an extensive background in martial arts, dance, competitive synchronized swimming, gymnastics, stunt fighting, and swordplay, as well as over 800 hours of training in yoga, yoga therapeutics, and meditation.

Laurie Brink, O.P., is an author, a Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa, a professor of New Testament Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and an associate editor of *The Bible Today.*

Barbara Brodsky is the founder and guiding teacher for Deep Spring Center for Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry and a channel for Aaron. Rooted in the Buddhist and Quaker traditions, her teaching reflects this balance.

Alicia Clark-Teper is a Sacred Ceremony Guide, Holy Fire III Karuna Reiki Master, Intuitive Astrologer, and Moonologist.

Shaila Catherine is a Buddhist meditation teacher, author on concentration and insight meditation, and meditation retreat teacher. She founded Bodhi courses online and is the principal teacher for Insight Meditation South Bay.

Rev. Dr. Sannyu Cawarrie, founder of the 8Ws Joy Healing ministry, is a playwright, a former therapeutic drug counselor for The Parker Coltraine Center, a Family Living Certified Instructor of infant massage, and creator of Atticizing.

Close Quarters Combat Academy is Ann Arbor's premiere reality-based Self-Defense school which prides themselves on reality-based curriculum. They also believe in character development through martial arts training starting with a positive, confident attitude.

Cohousing Tours are an effort of the residents of Touchstone Cohousing, a neighborhood of 46 households on six acres in Scio Township. One of only 15 worldwide.

Supa (Greg) Corner was ordained in the Chogye order of Korean Zen Buddhism. He studied Tibetan Buddhism with late master Kyabje Gelek Rimpoche and is currently a Jewel Heart instructor, community chaplain, and Director of Jewel Heart's West Michigan chapter.

Randall Counts is a long-time student of A Course in Miracles.

The Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle is a peer-directed writer's workshop and sponsor of the Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series of poetry and prose readings.

Christy DeBurton is a Yoga and Wellness Educator passionately helping people. For 20+ years she has guided students through private and small group yoga classes, online video courses, retreats, a Yoga Book Club, her Wellness Blog, and more.

Deep Spring Center focuses on how we can live with more wisdom and compassion, with lovingkindness, and non-harm to all beings. Our primary work includes meditation and spiritual inquiry.

Maum Gloria Cox is an ordained temple priest.

Trevor Chaitanya Eller incorporates a variety of healing arts, and meditation to his yoga teaching. His approach is well-rounded, adhering to the spiritual dimensions of the practice while integrating western anatomical principles and modern views on mindfulness mediation.

Kristin Ervin is a certified mindfulness instructor through Mindful Schools who has been teaching mindfulness to youth for over a decade. She is a co-founder of the Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME).

Jeannie Faulkner is a licensed massage therapist, yoga teacher, and certified Ayurveda therapist through Chakrapani Clinic and Research Center in Jaipur, India with additional studies in bodywork, alternative, and herbal therapies. Faulkner also earned an Education Master's from Ohio University.

One reason people resist change is because they focus on what they have to give up, instead of what they have to gain.

—Rick Godwin

Final Round Training Center is a martial arts gym specializing in high-level Muay Thai, No Gi & Gi JiuJitsu, Mixed Martial Arts, Wrestling, Boxing, and Cardio Kickboxing. Elite trainers actively compete at both a professional and amateur level.

The First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor has been a multi-generational, multiracial, multicultural liberal religious voice since 1865.

John Friedlander is an international psychic, author, and teacher with degrees from Duke University and Harvard Law School. He has studied with Jane Roberts and at the Berkley Psychic Institute. John's fourth book launched in February 2022.

Tret Fure is an acclaimed, multi-award winning singer-songwriter, musician, and storyteller extraordinaire who offers exceptionally well-crafted songs and stories rich with poignant themes of our age.

Sifu Genie has trained and taught Wu style Tai Chi Chuan for over 30 years. She is a disciple of Grandmaster Wu Kwong Yu, gatekeeper of the Wu style. Our teachers are her disciples and advanced students.

Karen Greenberg, RPT, is a Success-Tracking Train-the-Trainer, certified Essence Repatterning Practitioner, dance instructor, registered physical therapist (formerly teaching at University of Maryland Hospital), as well as being a Personal and Spiritual Growth teacher/author for metaphysical spiritual seekers worldwide.

Karla Groesbeck has 25 years' experience in the body movement, meditation, qigong, and Tai Chi Chuan. She founded Tai Chi Love Studios in Ann Arbor. Karla performs and innovates solo Tai Chi, two-person (martial art) and weapons forms.

Kate Hart is a composer, Grammy nominee, developer ("Connecting to Your Core Voice" and "Sayonic Music") utilizing sound, deeply aligning frequencies, and balancing harmonic fields.

Patricia Cooney Hathaway, PhD, is a spiritual counselor and Professor of Spirituality and Systematic Theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. She has a certificate in Spiritual Direction from the Shalem Institute of Spiritual Formation.

Health Yourself is a community of health-conscious people seeking health self-sufficiency.

Amy Hertz, student of Gelek Rimpoche, currently serves on the Jewel Heart board. In her various positions at HarperCollins, Penguin, and Random House, she has edited and published some of the bestselling Buddhist books for a general audience.

Huron Valley Aikikai is a supportive community of experienced practitioners who are eager to share their passion for training in a serious but approachable manner that develops the whole person—body, mind, and spirit.

INAI: A Space Apart, is a unique art gallery, meditation room, and reading room located near the Weber Center North Entrance on the campus of the Adrian Dominican Sisters.

Jewel Heart is dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism and to bringing the practice of this rich tradition within the context of contemporary life to everyone. They offer programs for all levels of interest.

"What you seek is seeking you" -- Rumi

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David Jibson is a poet, editor, and blog master.

JUMP-IN Therapy & Wellness currently provides Occupational and Physical Therapy services to adults and children. They will be offering Speech Language Therapy in the near future. Services are provided for all ages, birth to adults.

Hannah Kanter, LMSW, RYT-200, is a therapist, mindfulness teacher, yoga instructor, and Reiki practitioner. She specializes in helping individuals heal from anxiety and substance use disorders.

Karma Yoga offers thoughtful and reflexive yoga to promote both physical and mental well-being through an emphasis on breathing techniques and meditation.

Rob Kelly, LMT, is a pain relief specialist that provides clinical style massage therapy massage techniques such as Craniosacral Therapy, Neuromuscular Therapy, relaxation massage, and fascial mobilization techniques. He is also a Certified Lymphedema Therapist.

Esther Kennedy, OP, is with the Adrian Dominican Sisters in Adrian, MI.

Jennifer Kirk is a Holy Fire III Reiki Master, Chakra Energy Healer, and a 20 year Shamanic Practitioner. She has taught for 10 years and studied with Sandra Ingerman, Betsy Bergstrom, Ana Larramendi, Herb Stevenson, Caron Proudfoot-Edgar, and others.

Rev. Annie Kopko is an Interfaith minister.

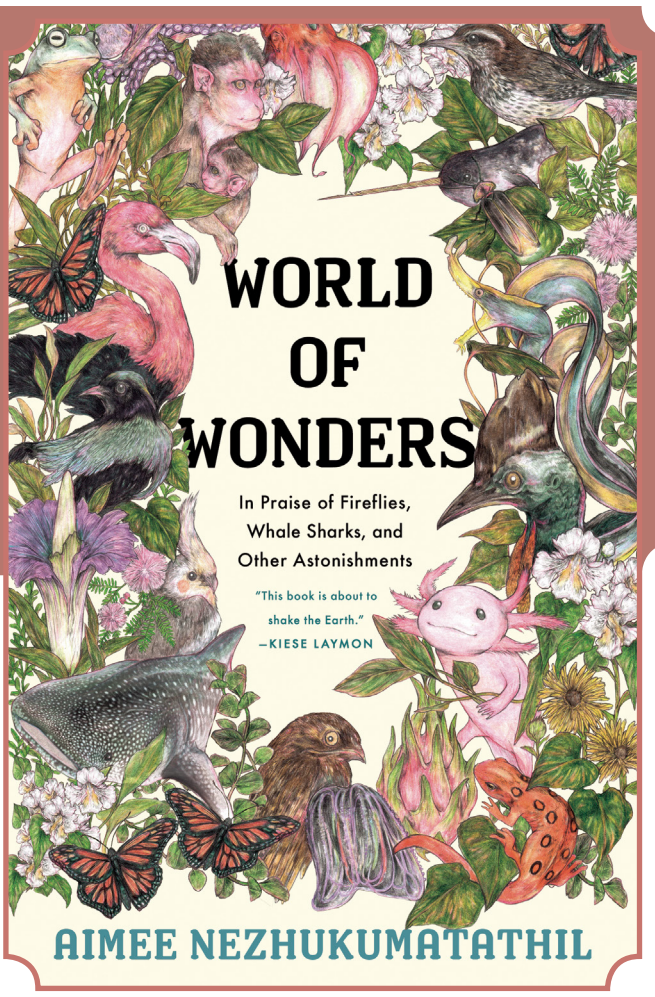
Lakewood School of Therapeutic Massage offers programs in March and September. Their ten-month massage therapy program is certified and accredited. Lakewood School participates in the Pell Grant program and three Federal Direct Loan programs.

Book Review

World of Wonders:

In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments

By Aimee Nezhukumatathil



By Christine MacIntyre • Illustrations by Jennifer Carson

World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments is a pleasant read from cover to cover. The lighthearted prose of celebrated poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil reads like a picturesque spring day—a soft breeze, sunlight warming the earth after a long winter, and scents of growth and new beginnings.

Nezhukumatathil's observations of some of the world's astonishments, primarily through the lens of a younger version of herself, provide readers with little-known details of each curiosity. Her rendition of how these curiosity's guided her and provided clarity to her life are interesting. Each chapter highlights a different creature, flower, or plant as she examines the beauty of all living things. Further, she derives meaning and value from each wonder she describes—animated but not to the point of delusional or impractical. By the book's end, optimism bloomed as I found myself subconsciously observing my surroundings, questioning, *What can this teach me in terms of my own life?*

The lighthearted prose of celebrated poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil reads like a picturesque spring day—a soft breeze, sunlight warming the earth after a long winter, and scents of growth and new beginnings.

From the first chapter, Catalpa Tree, Nezhukumatathil utilizes her knack for analogy and metaphor to create a vivid picture in readers' minds, placing the reader in the shadows of the catalpa trees of the south. Recollections from her childhood embody the many landscapes in which she lived, spanning the grounds of a Kansas mental institution where her Filipina mother was a doctor, the open plains of Arizona, and the startling cold climates of rural western New York and Ohio. As with any childhood experience, her life was not without awkward situations, drama, mishaps, tears, fears, and, of course, wonder. Yet, as her roots transplant from place to place, she absorbed her surroundings, finding beauty and kinship in some surprising places.

Nezhukumatathil contemplates her parents' influence on her with the wise voice of someone with a firm grasp on the things in life that truly matter—someone who, as a "brown girl" surrounded by white ones, enjoyed "extravagances" such as the occasional Little Debbie brownie shared with her sister. Her mother's confidence shaped and molded her, transforming the once shy, nervous sixth-grader, the girl who looked to the colossal catalpa (a steadfast fixture rooted in her life) to shield her and provide anonymity when she desired it most.

World of Wonders encompasses a harmonious blend of informative and inspirational prose. In just 165 pages, Nezhukumatathil captures the jovial nonchalance of childhood, seamlessly tying in the slights of becoming—of growing up. Her impressionable mind absorbed the world's delights, even in the face of the more poignant aspects inherent in learning to cope in an often-intimidating world.

True to form throughout the book, Nezhukumatathil 's tone is earnest and light while savoring the fun, quirky facts of creatures, such as how narwhals see through sound or an axolotl's wide smile. These facts are woven flawlessly into her childhood, often conjuring up a sense of nostalgia as readers reflect on their childhoods and the wonders they may have overlooked or taken for granted. Yet, at the same time, the book is a beacon of hope for the rest of us—it's never too late to learn to appreciate the beauty surrounding us.

As her roots transplant from place to place, she absorbed her surroundings, finding beauty and kinship in some surprising places.

Through lyrical and warmly written details of tender, precious moments from her past, Nezhukumatathil paints a picture for readers entrenched with profound beauty and feeling to which many people can relate. One passage reads, "…through all the electric and fragrant greens, the spray and the shine of the wild bursts of fruit, the messy blood-red days and the stench and the stink too – this finally was a man who'd never flinch, never leave my side when things were messy, or if he was introduced to something new. This was a man who'd be happy when I bloomed." Through her reflective use of words, she proficiently describes the power of feeling supported and loved as we evolve, journeying toward full bloom like the revered Corpse Flower.

Another chapter demonstrates how a bold shade of candy apple red lipstick is symbolic in her life. In junior high, she longed to feel a sense of belonging and fit in. She writes, "But even from that brief application, you fell in love with and slightly feared that slash of red, a cardinal out of the corner of your eye, lending definition to the outline of your mouth. A mouth that was used to speaking only when called upon."

Nezhukumatathil considers what it would be like to be a vampire squid as she bore the status of "new girl" again and again, especially in high school when the desire to chase away predators seems like a matter of life or death. The essays walk readers through the point in her life when she emerged from the shadows where that shy, unsure girl once dwelled in solitude. She reflects on wiggling out of a dark time in her life, moving on from trying to disappear to stepping into her own being, her own existence. "I was figuring out the delight and pop of music and the electricity on my tongue when I read out loud. I was at the surface again," she writes.

In retrospect, Nezhukumatathil shows readers how and why she appreciates and is grateful for all her experiences, even those spent seemingly friendless and uncertain of herself. At one point in the text, she describes how her "shadow year" helped her become the kind of woman who would eventually understand and relate with her students and check in with and be present with her sons as they navigate their youth.

True to form throughout the book, Nezhukumatathil 's tone is earnest and light while savoring the fun, quirky facts of creatures, such as how narwhals see through sound or an axolotl's wide smile.

Always enamored by the outdoors, Nezhukumatathil says she felt most seen in her childhood "in forests or fields, by lake or ocean." However, she does more than tell us; she shows us through text such as, "I learned how to be still from watching birds. If I wanted to see them, I had to mimic their stillness, to move slow in a world that wishes us brown girls to be fast." Further, she shows us how her passion for the outdoors guided her into becoming and belonging in the world. "And just like the potoo, who is rewarded for her stillness… perhaps you could try a little tranquility, find a little tenderness in your quiet."

Even in marriage, Nezhukumatathil derives meaning from creatures such as the bonnet macaque, who taught her to let "laughter be from a place of love." With pragmatism, she considers how her husband and her learning to navigate the wild jungle of south India, surrounded by laughing monkeys and a language foreign to their tongues, is much like learning to navigate the early days of marriage. "…to keep laughing in love. To make my love laugh."

Fumi Mini Nakamura's illustrations highlight the wonders that Nezhukumatathil explores throughout the book, complementing the tone and voice appropriately. The gorgeous, whimsical renditions of the ribbon eel, Touch-Me-Nots, and whale sharks, to name a few, gives the book sustenance without distracting from the compilation of essays and the lessons they have to offer readers.

Whether used as a noun or verb, a feeling or desire, wonder requires that we are curious enough to look past the distractions and fully appreciate the world's gifts. It requires us to Learn how to survive no matter the environment, how to smile in the face of adversity, and shake off the strange and less-than-lovely aspects of life… to notice unpleasantries without letting them dictate or control who we are as a person.

The essays enclosed in *World of Wonders* awaken readers' senses, allowing them, too, to witness the admirable traits and valuable lessons derived from even the most unlikely of sources, like the comb jelly or dragon fruit, dancing frog or even a red-spotted newt.

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS, AND THE CENTERS

Monica Levin is an author and speaker who facilitates self-discovery through inner guidance communication coaching. She specializes in holistic nutrition, spiritual counseling, mindset training, intuition training, and body language training through private sessions, online classes, and corporate training.

The Lighthouse Center is a meditation community, open at its present location since 1989 in Whitmore Lake, MI. It is a vortex of beautiful spiritual energy to help you attain a sense of calm, peace, and centeredness for the week ahead.

Lisa Lorius has training in shamanic drumming and healing.

Kamakshi Ma (Betty Eller) is a 30+ year massage therapist, who has practiced yoga and meditation for nearly 45 years. She is a graduate of the 200 Hour Yoga Maya Lifestyle and Teacher Training Course.

Rob Meyer-Kukan is a Licensed Massage Therapist, Sound Therapist, Level III Reiki Practitioner, teacher, and an aspiring naturopath. He loves serving others and fully lives out his business's mantra which is "we help you hear, see, and feel true wellness."

Nancy McCaochan, MA, brings a lifelong interest in philosophy and the history of ideas into the classroom. She is articulate and playful with a unique ability to communicate complex concepts in simple language.

Michelle McLemore, MA, CHTP, is a freelance writer, and former teacher, with a degree in the Teaching of Writing. She presented at Eastern Michigan University and regionally. She publishes a variety of fiction, non-fiction, and business projects.

Drake Moses Meadow, certified leader in The Dances of Universal Peace.

> A joyful life is not a floodlight of joy. A joyful life is made up of joyful moments gracefully strung together by trust, gratitude, inspirations, and faith.
>
> —Brene Brown

The Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME) is a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching and disseminating mindfulness practices in K-12 education, using best practices, established curricula and scientific evidence.

Edward Morin is a poet, translator, and English teacher at universities and colleges.

DR. DIANE BABALAS is a chiropractor and healer who has been in practice in Ann Arbor for over 20 years. She graduated from Palmer College of Chiropractic and from the BGI Academy of Mastery in 2013 and began mentoring and teaching in 2014. Babalas is a member of the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association and has completed significant additional study of pediatric issues and pediatric chiropractic adjusting.

Dr. Babalas was on the cover of issue #68 of The CW Biweekly. You can read her article "Ask for Help!" at crazywisdomjournal.com/weekly-68.

David Mosher has been a full-time musician in Michigan for over thirty years and has become a major thread in the fabric of Michigan's musical community.

MultiFaith Council of NW Ohio sponsors dances on Zoom. Its mission is to draw diverse faiths together in mutual respect, harmony, and collaborative service.

The Neighborhood Theatre Group's mission is to make theatre an accessible home for the collaboration of people, artistic challenges, and new ideas.

Guy Newland is Professor of Religion and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Central Michigan University. He has authored, edited, and translated several books on Tibetan Buddhism.

Sifu Genie Parker is Chief Instructor-Midwest, with 30+ years' experience teaching Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan. She is the first non-Chinese woman to take on disciples for the Wu family and only the third in North America to be so honored.

Lissa Perrin is a poet and clinical social worker.

Shellie Powers began working with the energies of the next generation modality, the Universal Sphere®, as one of the first certified Practitioners in 2012, and has been teaching the Universal Sphere® as a certified Universal Sphere® International Instructor since 2017.

Steve Ragsdale is a well-known local performer.

Judy Ramsey's shamanic practice, animal communication, and bodywork have been helping the Ann Arbor community for nearly 25 years. She teaches Sandra Ingerman's approach to shamanic practice, as well as four levels of Penelope Smith's animal communication, including interspecies counseling.

Elizabeth Rand is a mentored leader in The Dances of Universal Peace.

Ringstar encourages strength of body and mind through aerial fitness and aerial yoga.

Demo Rinpoche is Jewel Heart's Resident Spiritual Advisor. He studied at Drepung Loseling Monastery, earning the degree of Geshe Lharampa. Additional studies were at Gyume Tantric College, Sera College of Higher Tibetan Studies, and Union Theological Seminary.

His Eminence Loden Sherab Dagyab Kyabgön Rinpoche is an international spiritual teacher. At four, he was recognized as the 9th Kyabgön (protector) of Dagyab. He directed the Tibet House and in 1966 worked as a Tibetologist at Bonn University's Institute.

David Rosenberg is a certified Iyengar yoga instructor who has been teaching since 1993. He traveled to Pune, India in 1996 to study from the Iyengars as well as from other advanced Iyengar yoga teachers.

ON MAY 1, 2022, THE CRAZY WISDOM COMMUNITY JOURNAL WILL BE AVAILBLE ON OUR WEBSITE: CRAZYWISDOMJOURNAL.COM.

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS, AND THE CENTERS

Merilynne Rush MSHP, RN, BSN, is owner of the Dying Year, an End of Life Doula Trainer, a Home Funeral Consultant, and Advanced Care Planner using the Respecting Choices model.

Hartmut Sagolla has been studying Tibetan Buddhism for over 30 years. He lived at the Tibetan Buddhist Society, Melbourne, Australia, before moving to the U.S. He became the Program Director at Jewel Heart in 2002 and is a long-time Instructor.

Patricia Scott is a HeartMath® Certified Trainer & Coach, a Martha Beck Certified Life Coach, and a Holy Fire Reiki Master.

Mary Seibert, BSN, RYT200 is a Certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher with a foundation in Iyengar Yoga. She has taught for 20 years. She is also a Holistic Nurse and Certified Healing Touch Practitioner.

The Shimmy Shack food truck serves fries, sweet potato fries, shakes, burgers, and coneys... all vegan, gluten free, and delicious!! Voted as one of the top 10 food trucks in the country in 2021.

Janet Somalinog is a Religious Science Practitioner.

The Song of the Morning Community is comprised of yogis steeped in the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda who have been meditating and living a yogic lifestyle for decades.

> We are all meant to be naturalists each in his own degree, and it is inexcusable to live in a world so full of the marvels of plant and animal life and to care for none of these things.
>
> —Charlotte Mason

Gretchen Snell, PhD, DNM, is a clinician, researcher, instructor, and author of natural and energy medicine.

Susann Spilkin, ERYT500, has been immersed in the study of Hindu Mythology (Vedic, Tantric, Goddess-centered Sri Vidya) with Professor Douglas Brooks for many years. She deeply appreciates how these myths help us make sense of and navigate our own stories.

ROBERT THIBODEAU is the owner of the Mayflower Bookshop in Berkley, MI. He's also a singer/songwriter, astrologist, and purveyor of ancient wisdom. Thibodeau was on the cover of Issue #80 of *The CW Biweekly*. You can read the multi-faceted interview with Thibodeau at.crazywisdomjournal.com/biweekly-80.

Learn more about the Mayflower Bookstore at https://mayflowerbookshop.com.

Ema Stefanova, C-IAYT E-RYT500, is a master teacher, yoga therapist, healer, and author. Her gentle teaching style inspires and changes lives.

Gari Stein has a degree in Psychology, Child Development, and Dance. She is the founder of Music for Little Folks music school, an author, and professional development instructor for educators.

Still Mountain Buddhist Meditation Center is a community of people practicing meditation and studying Buddhist teaching, located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Marlena Studer is a well-known local performer.

Ringstar Studio has been hosting labyrinth walks at every solstice and equinox since 2015.

Haju Sunim is the Director of the Ann Arbor Zen Buddhist Temple.

Ven. Toan Sunim is the spiritual director of the Buddhist Society of Compassionate Wisdom.

Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe attended Drepung Loseling Monastery and was awarded the Geshe Lharampa, within the Geluk School of Tibetan Buddhism. He is Professor Emeritus of Buddhist Philosophy at Central University of Tibetan Studies. He also translated work by Lama Tsongkhapa.

Transformational Breath Foundation is inspired by founder, Judith Kravitz.

Judy Lee Nur-un-nisa Trautman is a certified leader and mentor in training with the Multifaith Council of NW Ohio.

Unity Vibration Kombucha Brewery in downtown Ypsilanti supports community enrichment events. They serve organic and Fair Trade ingredients, use recyclable cans, offer certified vegan beer and tea, and infuse each batch with Tibetan singing bowl 528 hz vibrations.

Stacey Vipond graduated from Southeastern Institute of Neuromuscular Massage with additional studies in Advanced Neuromuscular Therapy, Deep-Tissue, Trigger Point, Oncology and Hospital Massage, Bamboo-fusion, Advanced Bamboo-fusion, and Bamboo-fusion Visage. Stacey is the Michigan delegate for the American Massage Therapy Association.

Joe Walters is a 28-year practitioner of Chen Tai Chi Chuan.

Washtenaw Community College is a public community college in Ann Arbor Charter Township, Michigan. Founded in 1965, WCC enrolls 20,000+ students from over 100 countries to study each year and grants certificates and degrees to over 2,600 students annually.

SHELIA MAY is a life-long performing artist, dedicated to the study, performance, and education of Middle Eastern, South Asian, Latin, and various World dance forms. She founded the Ann Arbor-based belly dance troupe, Karma, and served as artistic director for eight years.

May is available for performances, private instruction, and offers weekly classes as well. You can learn more at leilahdances.com.

Shelia May graces the cover of Issue #61 of *The CW Biweekly*. Read the article about the transformative power of Raqs Sharqi, also known as belly dancing, with Sheila May at crazywisdomjournal.com/weekly-61.

TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS, AND THE CENTERS

Matt Watroba is the voice of folk music in Michigan for his work with WDET–Detroit Public Radio.

Valerie Weir brings passion and a life's study in human awareness to her teaching. She has over 1000 hours of hatha yoga training, 2000 hours of therapeutic and advanced bodywork training, and a full apprenticeship with evolutionary astrologer Steven Forrest.

Conrad Joseph Welsing Jr, MA, Cht, teaches at Washtenaw Community College and is a researcher and instructor in genetic genealogy.

Eve Wilson is a UCM Master Healer, award winning blogger, best-selling author on Amazon, and Trainer of Legal UCM Spiritual Healer Practitioners since 1986. She has been supporting transformation through monthly classes for nine years.

Suzy Wienckowski is a Reiki Master and Massage Therapist. With 40+years of experience, Suzy teaches traditional Usui Reiki and is a member of The Reiki Alliance. She studied with two Masters Hawayo Takata and Hiroshi Doi.

Julie Wolcott, M.A., CSW, LPC, has practiced counseling and psychotherapy for 40+ years. She is also a Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy Practitioner, Kripalu Yoga Teacher, a Certified Transformational Breath Facilitator (2004), and Senior Trainer with the Transformational Breath Foundation (2006).

Nancy Wolfe, M.F.A., is an art teacher at UM, EMU, WCC, WSU, and the Hannan Center in Detroit. Additionally, she is the Art Curator at Kerrytown Concert House in Ann Arbor. She has exhibited in Chicago, Toledo, and Beijing, China.

Julie Woodward, MSW, RYT-200, is a workshop instructor who brings her professional experience as a health educator, wellness coach, and yoga instructor to offer students a mindful, embodied approach to self-care.

Katherine Austin Wooley E-RYT, is the owner of Karma Yoga in Bingham Farms, MI, which opened in 2003. A teacher for nearly 30 years, Katherine is also a Heart-Based Meditation Technique teacher and a registered Yoga Alliance yoga teacher trainer.

Wu's Tai Chi Chuan Academy is headed by Sifu Genie Parker, Chief Instructor-Midwest, who has over thirty years' experience training and teaching Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan. She is the first non-Chinese woman to take on disciples for the Wu family.

Master Wasentha Young, MA, is a practitioner since 1968 in both Tai Chi and Qigong. She has received formal instruction in Buddhist and Taoist meditation, 5 Elements, and Shiatsu/Acupressure and has a master's degree in transpersonal studies.

Master Zhong Hai (Winnie) is the Chief Nun at Triple Crane Retreat Center. With a number of teacher training programs and retreats both in USA and Taiwan, Master Hai teaches Chan and Yoga while actively promoting local programs in Michigan.

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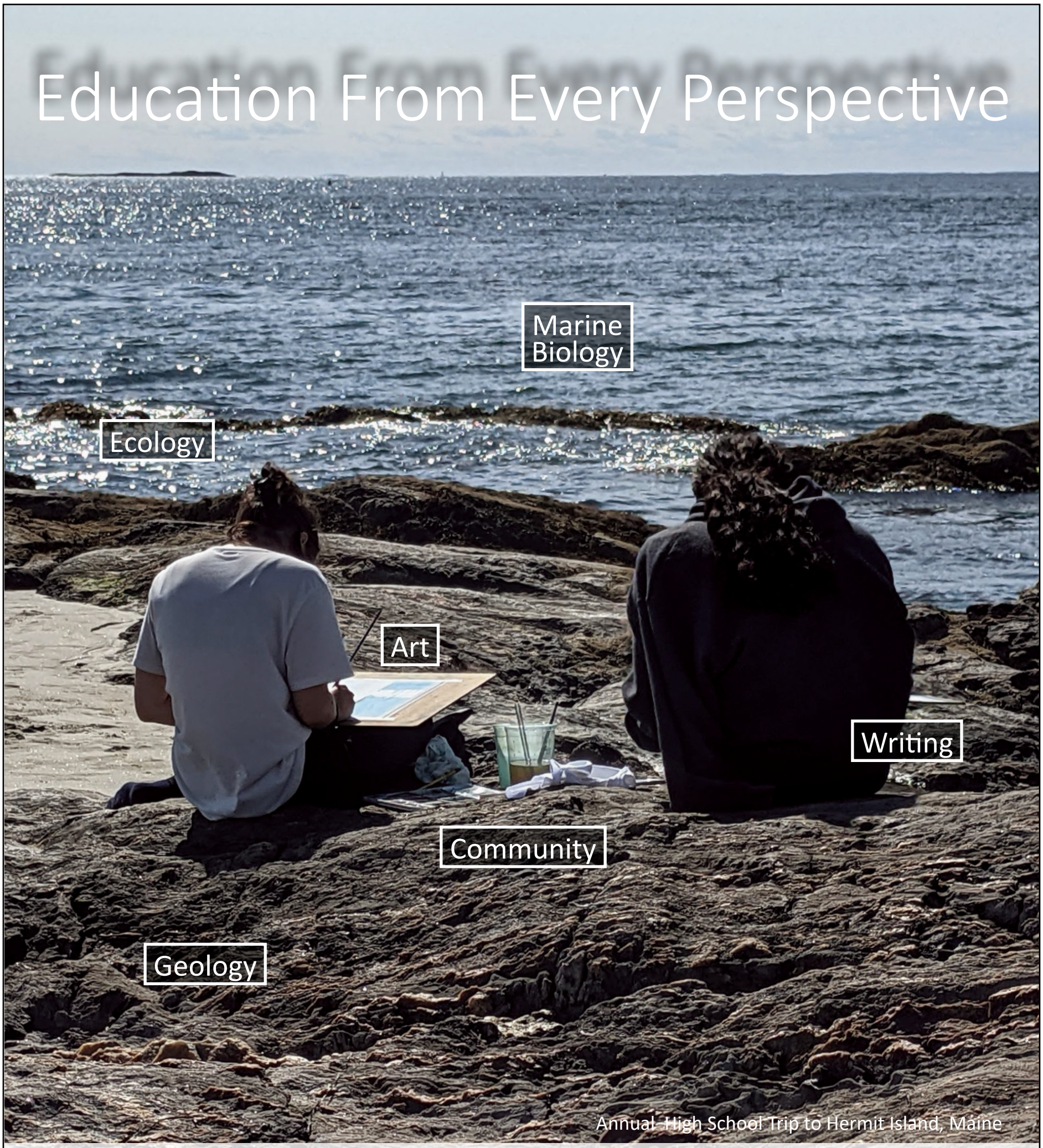

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